

William Walton

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My Turn Today, Yours also...

A CLOSE VIEW OF DEATH AND It's Subsequent Immortalities;

GIVING

A large Account of the PRIMITIVE CHRISTIANS, who conducted their Lives by those Views.

WITH A

PREVIOUS DISCOURSE,

Briefly, but fully, demonstrating the Truth of Christianity, and, in Consequence of that, urging most earnestly to solemn Consideration.

The Whole with Vigour inforced by an awful FRONTISPIECE, exhibiting one of our deplorable Bodies putrefying in the Vault.

By THOMAS CANNON, of *Gray's-Inn*, Gent.

Remember thy End and let Enmity cease; remember Corruption and Death, and abide in the Commandments,
Eccluſ. xxviii. 6.

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A

Close View of Death, &c.

CHAP. I.

Internal and external evidences of Christianity. Tenth Persecution under the Roman *emperors. Also the behaviour of particular martyrs*; Blandina, *and others.*

PREVIOUS DISCOURSE.

THE mouth of our Lord uttered—*Be ye perfect as your father who is in heaven is perfect.* Now, besides social morality divinely urg'd in these commands; "Resist not evil;" and "Love "your enemies;" this had also been remonstrated to us; *Behold the fowls of the air; for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feedeth them:* His ever-open hand scatters liberality all around; he hears the young lion's hungry roar, and is attentive

to the craving cry of the raven: for the divine breaſt is an immenſely gliding river, overflowing with perpetual good. But were the perfection of our parent deity living in our hearts, our love like his would diffuſe itſelf every where; our beneficence too would ſhower upon all the brute creation. Behold; we children of our Father in heaven, enter into their uneaſineſs, briſkly ſpring to their relief, if the attempt is at all promiſing; and when 'tis needful they ſhould be put to death, or by pain ſtimulated to ſpeed, as in the caſe of labouring beaſts; why then we affect them with the leaſt diſcompoſure, and give them the ſmalleſt ſtroke of affliction, that is poſſible. Never would we roaſt a live lobſter to pamper the glutton palate; nor a gloomy wrath be vented upon a horſe faſtened by a load to the laſh. I ſingle this inſtance from many more of quite ſavage cruelty, becauſe every one has occaſion to obſerve it. But chriſtianity producing it's fruit, would moſt certainly ſet theſe matters right: THEREFORE here we have a proof that the Religion of Jeſus is true, which ſo faſhions us to goodneſs; that it hath a foundation, in virtue of which it muſt ever exiſt; as taking riſe from the one immortal ſovereign, who is the primary indeficient ſpring of all benefit, who is love inceſſantly operating; yea chriſtianity appears to be a ſpark of the diamond

rock;

rock; which immoveable itſelf puts all worlds into motion, and emits immenſely far and wide, ſtreams of rays in numberleſs directions, ſupporting and enlivening every thing that breathes. Whence Jeſus argues with irrefragable force "If Satan, "in maintenance of his cauſe, ejects his "ſubject devils, then doth his divided "kingdom totter, and it draweth ſwiftly "to an end." It here merits our obſervation, that the world only ſubſiſts by goodneſs; God furniſhes food, air, and every needful thing, to all creatures: then do not vainly hope, that you ſhall any how but by goodneſs, live with God for ever in felicity. THUS concluſive, and thus evident, ſtands the intrinſic proof of chriſtianity; which beſides is the ſingle religion that reconciles the Creator to the revolted but repenting creature.

For it's external demonſtration; — Tho' I might juſtly inſiſt upon it's ſpreading over the *Roman* empire in defiance of every violence, and of every art, which even bated chriſtians in bears-ſkins; I wave the advantage of that appeal, becauſe I am deſirous of fixing the attention upon one point; as well knowing that a thing once demonſtrated, can never rightly be brought into debate again: and this point I will, with God's help, make ſo glaringly clear, that the reader's ſoul and my own ſhall ever be the better for it. The propoſition

in view is this;—It is altogether impoſſible, that in an age when the witneſſes of facts were living, and the records acceſſible to the public; upon which a new and diſtaſteful religion is impregnably built;—that in theſe times thouſands and ten thouſands of men, women, and ſtriplings, and, amongſt the former, many moſt diſtinguiſhed for natural and acquired parts, ſhould die for that religion, either in or out of torture, or even endure common perſecution, and the plundering of their goods; if theſe facts, which conſtitute the foundation of the religion, were not quite undeniably certain. Now Chriſt reſts his doctrine upon the miraculous facts, ſaying, *If I had not done among them the works which none other man did, they had not had ſin: but now have they both ſeen and hated both me and my Father.*

Out of the *ten* perſecutions in which Chriſt's ſheep were torn piteouſly in pieces by the dogs of this world, I ſhall produce the beginning of the *laſt* only, collected from *Lactantius* and *Euſebius*; becauſe the moſt cruel of perſecutors then aſſured the world, they had at length triumphed over *Jeſus*'s whining ſervants and their beloved bible. We know now how vain their brag was, Praiſed be God, it was vain.

With ſome retouches, and illuſtrating additions, I ſhall give the narration in our *Eachard*'s nervous words:

The

The Roman emperor *Diocletian* and his adopted Cæſar *Galerius*, having agreed between them upon a deciſive perſecution of the chriſtians, fixed on the twenty-third of February in the year of our Lord 303, for commencing the execution: upon which day the *Terminalia*, feaſts dedicated to the god *Terminus*, were uſually celebrated among the *Romans*. This was ſillily regarded as an omen of their putting a *Term* to the chriſtian religion. The firſt droppings of the ſtorm begun in *Nicomedia*, a famous and populous city of *Thrace*. In the morning of fatal February 23, the præfect of the city, accompanied with ſome officers, went to the church of the chriſtians, and having forced open the doors, ſought for the image of the God they worſhipped; but meeting with none, took the ſacred books and other things they found, and toſſed them into the fire, filling all places with moſt boiſterous violence. This was done in the view of *Diocletian* and *Galerius*, who held ſome debate whether fire ſhould be ſet to the church; but the former over-ruled that, as it would endanger the reſt of the city: wherefore officers were employed who in a few hours levelled that lofty ſtructure with the ground. An edict was ſet up the following day, ordering all chriſtian churches to be demoliſhed, and the ſcriptures to be burnt; that all chriſtians ſhould

be incapable of any honours and offices; that no rank and dignity ſhould exempt them from torture; and that they ſhould be put out of the protection of the law, and conſequently have no power to right themſelves by ſuit. Upon the publication of this edict, a certain chriſtian took the liberty to tear it down, rallying the emperors upon their kicking againſt the prickles: who being immediately ſeized, after he had endured all ſorts of tortures with admirable patience, was burnt alive. This edict was followed by another, which commanded the prelates of the church to be put in bonds, and all imaginable methods taken to compel them to ſacrifice.

Yet the ſeverity of theſe proclamations did not ſatisfy the barbarous *Galerius*, who to puſh on *Diocletian* to the utmoſt extremity, ſecretly cauſed the imperial palace to be fired; and this not ſufficiently ſtirring up the wary old emperor, he repeated the fact, and charged all upon the chriſtians, reporting abroad, *that they had conſpired with the eunuchs to murther the emperors, who were both of them in great danger of being burnt with the palace.* This drove *Diocletian* beyond all reſtraint of reaſon, and in a fury he reſolved to force all to ſacrifice, beginning with his daughter *Valeria* and his empreſs *Priſca*. He put ſeveral eunuchs and courtiers of the greateſt credit to death; particularly

Dorotheus, *Gorgonius*, and *Peter*; which laſt ſtoutly endured ſcourgings, gridirons, and fires. Of the preſbyters and deacons, ſeveral were apprehended, and without trial condemned and executed; and alſo *Anthimus* biſhop of *Nicomedia* was beheaded, with whom was joined a great number of martyrs. No regard was had to age, ſex, or diſtinction; and not ſatisfied with ſuch ſcant executions, they burnt houſefuls at once, and droves of *the excellent* tyed together with ropes, were canted into the ſea, with millſtones about their necks. Nor was the perſecution confined to this city; for judges were every where placed at the temples to compel all men to ſacrifice. Priſons in all parts were crouded, and unheard of tortures with ſtudy contrived; and that none but Pagans might have benefit of the law, they ſet up altars in the very courts of juſtice; where every one was obliged to ſacrifice, before he was admitted to plead: ſo men came before their judges, as into the preſence of their gods. New edicts were daily diſpatched into other cities and provinces. Thus the perſecution was quickly ſet on foot in the greateſt part of the empire, and became an almoſt univerſal ſcourge.

This dreadful ſpleen of man to mankind vented out it's monſtrous rage ten years under *Diocletian* and his ſucceſſors; though, for the latter part of that long ſpace, moſt

in the eaſt of the empire; where, as *Euſebius* reports, the corruptions of the chriſtians were moſt diſmal. It was at firſt more univerſal, and proſecuted with ſuch violence and rigour, that the emperor and his brutiſh colleague thought they had compleated their work, and told the world in ſome inſcriptions, *they had utterly aboliſhed the name, and ſuperſtition of the chriſtians, and had reſtored and propagated the worſhip of the gods.* 'Tis impoſſible to enumerate the vaſt multitude of martyrs in all parts, or to ſet forth the almoſt infinite variety of their miſeries and torments; for, as *Lactantius* obſerves, a hundred tongues filled with the ſtrongeſt voice, would be unequal to ſuch a labour. The deaths were countleſs, and exceeded all former relations: in *Arabia* the chriſtians were generally beheaded; in *Phœnicia* they were devoured by wild beaſts; ſome were ſlain by maſhing their legs, as in *Cappadocia*; others were hung up with their heads downward and ſuffocated by a ſmothering fire, for inſtance, in *Meſopotamia*; again, in *Syria* they were faſtened upon gridirons and broiled to death. Some, in *Pontus*, had ſharp reeds thruſt up under all their nails; and others melted lead poured upon their naked bodies, which burned in it's paſſage the moſt neceſſary parts: while there were thoſe, who, without the leaſt commiſeration from their fellow-men, ſuffered ob-

ſcene

ſcene tortures unfit to be told; which the impious judges exhibited as a mark of their acute wit, thinking the greatneſs of that appeared in the moſt unnatural inventions. In *Ægypt*, infinite numbers of men, women, and children, underwent variety of deaths; ſome of whom after being moſt inhumanly ſcourged, after their fleſh had been torn away with pincers, after they were laid upon the rack and had there ſuſtained torments of different kinds, and horrible to be heard, were committed to the flames, and others flung into the ſea.

Yet theſe heaven-endowed ſufferers were not diſcouraged from chearfully offering their perſons to the executioners. Some died under torture; others were hung up to ſtarve. They crucified ſome in the common way; but others more cruelly with their heads down, where they were left by pain and famine to expire. But the torments and indignities inflicted upon martyrs in the province of *Thebais*, a part of *Ægypt* bordering on *Æthiopia*, ſurpaſs all narration. Theſe with ſharp jagged ſhells, inſtead of the torturing-irons, were raked all over their bodies, 'till life thus gradually left them. Women were tied up by one of their feet, and with an engine hoiſted into the air, and their perſons being quite naked, were made a moſt inhuman ſpectacle. Others were faſtened with their legs

legs diſtended (a great mercy this!) to boughs of different trees wreſted together with machines, which when let go, in a moment ſplit aſunder the bodies of the martyrs. All which was not for a few days, but laſted the ſpace of whole years. Sometimes no more than ten; then upwards of twenty, or even thirty perſons were deſtroyed: but at other times near threeſcore, nay an hundred men together, with very ſmall children and women, paſſed this dreadful death in one day, being condemned to various, and interchangeably apply'd puniſhments. In *Phrygia* the ſoldiers inveſted a populous city inhabited by chriſtians only, and ſetting fire to it, men, women, and little ones, while calling out upon God, but of their own ſpecies unpitied, reſigned their ſpirits in the inveloping flames. *Will not deiſts give us leave to call man a fallen creature?*

Great numbers of prelates and other clergy ſuffered in theſe days, far too many to be enumerated; 'till at length ſome of the governours ſatiated with ſuch a vaſt effuſion of blood, ſeemed to ſhew marks of clemency, declaring, *it was unfit to pollute the cities with the gore of the inhabitants, and bring odium upon the mild government of the emperors, by ſo many deaths of their ſubjects.* They imagined to ſuppreſs the chriſtians by making them very wretched in this life, and ſetting on them the ſevereſt marks of infamy.

infamy. Accordingly, ſome had their noſes and hands cut off; others their eyes put out, and one of their legs diſabled. *Euſebius* ſays, the chriſtians are truly not to be numbered, who had their right eye put out and ſeared with a red-hot iron, and their left leg made uſeleſs by torturing inſtruments; after which their ſentence ordered them to the mines, not for the ſervice they could do, but the great miſery they muſt there ſuffer;—ſetting aſide divine conſolations; which beamed glorioufly into the mind of St. *John*, when baniſhed for the faith into the deſolate iſland of *Patmos*.

No art was uneſſayed to eradicate chriſtianity, and eſtabliſh paganiſm. Particularly, they took all poſſible methods to ſuppreſs the ſcriptures: but the weak things of the world overcame the things that were mighty. Theſe mangled creatures were really ſtouter by divine ſtrength, than the emperors with each an army of an hundred thouſand men. And ſuch multitudes, ſure objects of ſlaughter, never conſpired, nor lifted up a hand againſt them: which good behaviour of theirs, 'tis evident, proceeded not from fear of the worſt death. And all the time of which we are writing, many *(too many)* gave examples of inſuppreſſible bravery; they ſtrangely thronged the tribunals of their judges, declared their religious opinion, contemned the barbarities of their enemies, and received

ceived the chilling doom with a ſmile of ſweet joy.

Here, in order to know how particular perſons underwent their ſentence, and how the hand of God appeared in this affair, we muſt turn back to the year 178, when a circumſtantial relation was ſent in a letter from the churches of *Lyons* and *Vienna* to thoſe of *Aſia* and *Phrygia*. This paper tells us, it exceeds human abilities to paint the brutal cruelty of the pagans, and the ſeverity of the martyrs ſufferings: who were baniſhed from their houſes, forbid to ſhew their heads, reproached, beaten, hurried from place to place, plundered, ſtoned, impriſoned, and in priſon treated with ungoverned rage and unrelenting malice. Their ſlaves were forced by torture to charge their maſters with murdering and eating young children, (this aroſe from ſome expreſſions about the holy ſacrament) to accuſe them of inceſt, and of other abominable crimes in private. Theſe unjuſt proceedings ſtired up *Epagathus*, a young man of admirable piety, to remonſtrate with the governour of *Lyons* in favour of his much-injured brethren: upon which, being aſked if he was a chriſtian, he made an honourable confeſſion of his faith in Chriſt, and was received into the number of martyrs, being called by the governour the *advocate of the chriſtians*. Then the ſame queſtion was addreſſed to

others,

others, who with moſt ready chearfulneſs accompliſhed the ſolemn teſtimony of martyrdom; only ſome few, about ten of them, being unprepared and unexerciſed, through fear and frailty fell away, to the inexpreſſible grief of the reſt. From thenceforth theſe confeſſors underwent ſuch tortures as were almoſt beyond belief. But the whole rage of the multitude, governour, and ſoldiers burſt upon theſe five; *Pothinus*, the aged biſhop of the place; *Sanctus*, a deacon of *Vienna*; *Maturus*, one lately baptized; *Attalus*, of *Pergamos*; and a diſtinguiſhed woman named *Blandina*. All were afraid for this laſt, eſpecially her own miſtreſs, becauſe ſhe had ſuch a weak body; but *Blandina* was ſupply'd with ſtrength ſo wonderful, that thoſe who in their turns tortured her from morning to evening, became feeble, and confeſſed themſelves conquered, admiring that ſuch a torn and mangled frame could yet breathe, when one ſort of her torments was (humanly) ſufficient to end her life. But this bleſſed woman, a truly couragious champion, acquired new furniture of vigour during the very anguiſh; and it was a refreſhment and abated her pains, to pronounce the words, *I am a chriſtian, and there is nothing of wickedneſs acted with us.* As for *Sanctus*, the deacon, he in a ſuper-human manner endured his exceſſive tortures, throwing them off with that firmneſs, that he never told his name, condition,

condition, nor habitation; but to all interrogatories anſwered, *I am a chriſtian*; which ſo provoked his examiners, that they claped red-hot plates of braſs upon the tendereſt parts of his body, which was all over ſtripes and wounds, and ſo bowed and contracted together, that it had loſt the external ſhape of a man. But ſome days after when the ſame things were repeated upon him, with a view either to ſubdue *Sanctus* himſelf, or conquer others by his death, this ſhrunk body of his by a particular favour of God, became ſuddenly ſtrait, and he recovered both his ſhape and his limbs. Several others were likewiſe put to tortures; among whom was a woman whoſe name was *Biblias*, one of the lapſed, yet now moſt happily reſtored.

But when theſe puniſhments were rendered ineffectual, they employed impriſonment in dark and noiſome places, where they were put into a ſort of ſtocks uſed in thoſe times, which not only loaded the legs of priſoners, but very painfully diſtended them; and here they were deſerted of all human aſſiſtance: ſo ſome ſuffered ſuffocation; others died of their pains; and there were thoſe who triumphed over all miſeries and eſcaped.

But to crown the whole: biſhop *Pothinus* was ſingled out, a very venerable man of ninety, ſent to *Lyons* by St. *Polycarp* from *Rome*. Old age and infirmities had brought him

him ſo low, that he could ſcarce move himſelf, but his ſoul was vigorous in this worn-out clay, and an earneſt deſire of glorifying Chriſt in his martyrdom, gave him unknown muſcular ſtrength. Being apprehended, he was haled along to the tribunal, magiſtrates, ſoldiers, and people following after with ſuch loud acclamations, as if our Lord himſelf had been in their hands. When aſked by the governour, *who was the God of the chriſtians?* knowing the queſtion to be captious, he reply'd, *if you be worthy, you ſhall know.* Hereupon without reverence to his age, or any regard to humanity, he was barbarouſly draged up and down, and received mercileſs blows; they that were near, kicking and ſtriking him; and thoſe at a diſtance throwing whatever they could find; by which they thought to revenge the quarrel of their gods. At length, taken up from the ground almoſt dead, he was thrown down in the priſon, where two days after he committed his ſpirit to God. After a ſmall interval, the four champions, *Maturus*, *Sanctus*, *Attalus*, and *Blandina*, were brought forth among the wild beaſts in the amphitheatre (a day on purpoſe being beſtowed upon the people) where the two firſt underwent every kind of infliction, as if they had never ſuffered before: now they were clap'd down in a hot iron chair; then drag'd and torn by the

ſavage

ſavage beaſts; and whatever the enraged multitude demanded from above. Theſe two, after continuing long alive in the heats of a glorious and mighty combat, at laſt were ſlain, having been made a ſpectacle to the city, inſtead of the engagement of the gladiators. But *Blandina*, being hung upon a ſtump of wood fixed in the ground, was ſet forth as food for the wild animals; who by her ſtrong and moſt fervent prayers redoubled the ardor of the ſaints, having in the perſon of their ſuffering ſiſter a glorious view of their tormented and crucify'd Lord. But when none of the ſavage creatures would meddle with her, ſhe was looſed, and took back to priſon, being reſerved for another combat. Then *Attalus* was required of the people, and one led him round the ſtage, with a tablet carried before, upon which was inſcribed in Latin, *This is Attalus the chriſtian.* But when the governour underſtood he was a free citizen of *Rome*, he commanded him to priſon with the other chriſtians, and wrote to the emperor *Antonius*, to know his pleaſure concerning him, and the reſt.

During this ceſſation, the holy perſons ſpent their time in the higheſt exerciſe of love; praying for their enemies and torturers, and uſing all poſſible means to reſtore and comfort thoſe who had ſhrunk from the rigour of the perſecution; yet ſtill ſo modeſt as not to aſſume the title of martyrs;

martyrs; aſcribing that honour only to Chriſt himſelf, and ſuch as had already ſuffered. Here God ſhone into their ſouls with his fulleſt beams, and ſpiritual comfort quieted the throbs of earthly miſery. Now whereas *Alcibiades*, one of the impriſoned, who led an auſtere life, feeding only upon bread and water,—purpoſed to continue the ſame courſe in his confinement, it was revealed to *Attalus* in a viſion, that *Alcibiades* did not well in declining the uſe of God's good creatures; which might put a ſtumbling-block in the path of others. Whereupon he ſubmitted, and uſing indifferently all meats as he found them, gave God thanks for his munificent bounty.

Shortly after, the emperor returned this anſwer, *That thoſe who confeſſed themſelves chriſtians ſhould ſuffer; but ſuch as renounced that faith ſhould be diſcharged.* And there being now a grand publick ſolemnity juſt commenced, at which was a very numerous concourſe of the neighbouring nations, the governour ordered the martyrs to be brought to the tribunal; producing them as a pompous ſhow before the multitude. Being examined again, as many as were found *Roman* citizens they beheaded, excepting only *Attalus*, who for his extraordinary boldneſs of confeſſion was racked, without reſpect to his citizenſhip. The others were ſubjected to tortures, and to the

the wild beaſts. And now Chriſt's glory became conſpicuous in ſuch as had formerly deny'd the faith, who upon this occaſion turned confeſſors; and being tried a-part, were added to the liſt of martyrs. In the time of their examination, a brave *Phrygian* phyſician, called *Alexander*, gave them ſuch open encouragement, that he was ſeized; and, owning himſelf a chriſtian, was condemned to the beaſts. The next day the governour produced him in the amphitheatre together with *Attalus*; and this couragious man with joy underwent all the torments, praiſing the Almighty. *Attalus* in the midſt of torture upon the heated iron-chair, told the people, THEY *now fed upon human fleſh, not the chriſtians; who were guilty of no evil.* Being aſked the name of his God, he reply'd, *God has not a name, as men have.* They both at laſt in ſweet triumph commended their ſpirits to their maker.

But for the top grace of this bloody ſolemnity, *Blandina* was a third time brought forth, with one *Ponticus*, a lad of fifteen, who continuing firm to his glorious profeſſion, it ſo piqued the multitude, that they pay'd no regard to the youth of the one, nor the ſex of the other, but laid upon them all ſorts of puniſhment, and made them paſs through the whole courſe of tortures. *Ponticus* gazing upon his ſiſter in affliction, and animated to an inſuppreſſible

preſſible livelineſs, endur'd ſteddily many of the moſt exquiſite torments, 'till at length, intrepid and invincible to men, but with a ſoul melting in penitence and love to the adorable God, this bloſſom of Chriſt breathed his laſt. But now in the end of all, the admirable and incomparable *Blandina*, having, like a valiant mother in *Iſrael*, been the ſupport of all her children, and ſent them before as conquerors to the immortal King, with joy haſtened to her own departure, as to the moſt decorated nuptial feaſt. Having been ſcourged, tortured upon the chair, and expoſed to ſavage beaſts by ſavager men, ſhe was at laſt ſlain with a ſword; and a ſmile betokening mild acceptance of all evil, and love paſſing utterance to redeemed mankind, ſhone beyond the ſtroke of death in her excruciated face: the pagans themſelves confeſſing, that no woman with a carriage ſo heroic, even among the martyrs, ever ſuſtained ſo many, ſo repeated, and ſo great torments.

Yet not by all this, was their immenſe rage fully glutted; but it broke out afreſh upon the martyrs corpſes; many of which were found in the priſon: theſe they threw out to dogs, and after vile treatment in the ſtreets for ſome days, burned them, and ſwept the aſhes into the river *Rhone*; as though able to vanquiſh omnipotence, and prevent them of a reſurrection.

Now

Now what can we ſay after this but, that GOD WOULD BE GOD; and bore fleſh and blood on triumphant through ſuch ſanguinary ſcenes, as (ſaving the infinite diſproportion) a great writing-maſter can make a bad pen do it's work.

That nature of herſelf is incapable, at leaſt in ſo many inſtances, of any thing approaching to this, appears actually from the ſufferers in the inquiſition, where they have equally the ſupport of a good conſcience: for a former lamenting party tells us, "they beg by all that is ſacred for "one moment's relief, in a manner one "would think no human heart could "withſtand." And if our commodious ſeats ſometimes grow uneaſy, what would be the caſe, were the parts upon which our bodies reſt, to come into touch with heated iron, ſupping up our thighs, elbows, back? Should we poſſeſs our ſouls enough to make a well-reaſoned ſpeech, if we were held down in this chair? Should we give a heedful ear (for inſtance) to the queſtion, *What's the name of your God?* and, inſtead of calling to be taken off the conſuming ſeat, ſolidly anſwer, *Ye ignorants, God is unutterable?* brag who pleaſes, for my part, I muſt confeſs; that though by the grace of God, I am come to a patient ſufferance of life's common evils, while unvarying abſtemiouſneſs keeps off violent illneſs; and my ever-bleſſed preſerver

ſerver hath ſcreened me from overwhelming accidents; nay, while I lived without God in the world, even wretched philoſophy put me upon fortifying my mind in this vale of woe; ſo that firſt by habit, but far more by grace, I might boaſt to have attained no little reſolution: Though indeed all this is conſiderable, and might upon occaſion go a great way; YET were I to pretend to ſay I could deport myſelf like *Attalus*, while burning iron was eating away the fleſh over half my body, I ſhould in that pretenſion be a villainous fool, and could expect no better for my impudent diſingenuity, than that God would withdraw from me the ſmiles of his countenance; the very ſupport of my life, and the only rejoicing of my heart. You'll apprehend me with reference to the ſituation of affairs, where you and I now ſtand: for were that emergency to come over again, I ſhould without demur clap myſelf down in the chair, fixedly looking for proper aid from the Almighty.

CHAP.

CHAP. II.

Deſign of God in ſupporting the martyrs. Advantage of fixing the mind to one topic. Original ſin inquired into. The reader conjured to come to Chriſt. Our paſſions with the higheſt reaſon exerciſed. Some paſſages of evangelical hiſtory.

TO preſs you farther ſeems needleſs. No doubt you are convinced mortal firmneſs cannot paſs this trial. You have then the arm of God made bare. And why ſo? Indeed 'tis to ſerve a great point; even that your ſouls may live; that repenting, you may believe the goſpel. For *this* were theſe wonders wrought in frail fleſh by omnipotence; and then handed down with indubitable authenticity: O be not yourſelves your own eternal deſtroyers.— But conſider: *where*, in an affair of life and death, are people forward to believe without examination? When the dead warrant comes down to *Newgate*, don't they look after the king's ſign manual? But if they found reaſon for diſtruſt, you would have the warrant preſently ejected. So that 'tis impoſſible in the nature of things, for thouſands to die for a faith ariſing from facts, if there was any ground to doubt the facts. We have read of ſome who fell away at ſight of the tor-

turing

turing inſtruments; but for a flaw in the evidences of chriſtianity, not of one. We have therefore got for a baſis the evangelical hiſtory demonſtrated: and that clearly conveys to us the deity of Jeſus Chriſt; juſt object of unlimited confidence. On the other hand, if he is not God, my guilty ſoul can have no repoſe here, becauſe not a glimmer of ſafety hereafter. I made uſe of only one medium juſt now, to aſcertain the truth of chriſtianity, becauſe that ſtrikes root in the memory; ſo I ſhall now ſelect but a ſingle text in proof of our Lord's divinity. The advantage of this practice I found when in *Romiſh* countries; where I was aſſailed by prieſts regular and ſecular, who were more than ordinary diligent that a lettered ſoul might not periſh. But the waves of zeal, of artifice, and of offers, were all repell'd by this mound; *There is one God, and one mediator between God and man, the man Chriſt Jeſus:* of whom it is ſaid in another place, *that he is able to ſave them to the uttermoſt, that come unto God by him, ſeeing he ever liveth to make interceſſion for them.* I may (continued I) nay I muſt, believe this. And does a perſon higher than the heavens, indeed live to interceed for me? then pray ſpare your pains, for I never will apply to St. *Anthony* of *Padua*, nor, much as I honour her memory, to the *Virgin Mary* herſelf." For the purpoſe in queſtion

ſtion, we'll take theſe words: *Where two or three* (ſays the Lord) *are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midſt of them.* This he can't be, except preſent every-where; nor every-where preſent except he is God: therefore we are indeed to honour the Son, *even as* the Father. What awe then, and what love, ought to flood all our ſouls, when in the *Nicene* Creed we ſay—*Who for us men and for our ſalvation came down from heaven—and was incarnate by the Holy Ghoſt of the Virgin Mary—and was made man—and was crucified alſo for us under Pontius Pilate—He ſuffered and was buried—and the third day he roſe again according to the ſcriptures—and aſcended into heaven—and ſitteth on the right hand of the Father!*

I have employed this chain of reaſoning, which cannot, I apprehend, be broken, nor weakened; that when you are turned to the doleful, and yet joyful ſpectacle, *God's lamb covered with his blood for ſinners ſhed*, you may not put by this freſh attempt for your ſouls by ſaying "Here's nothing but flouriſh, and an ap-"plication to the paſſions." Come loath your ſins that butchered the divine Jeſus, upon whom was laid the iniquity of us all. Lament ye before God the well of that corrupt heart, from whence you draw up all your odious wickedneſs. Come believe in Jeſus Chriſt, who was raiſed again for our juſtification, that we ſeeing our ſurety diſ-

charged,

charged, might know our debt of ſin is paid, and without heſitation caſt our eternal ſouls upon *him*, who ſo loved us, that he gave himſelf for us. Come, that reconciled to your heavenly father, you may have the ſpirit of ſons; even the Holy Ghoſt; who being omnipotent, will create a clean heart planted with all divine tempers in you; and with this holineſs moſt certainly ſhall you ſee the Lord with joy. Therefore ſince *the ſoul that ſinneth, it ſhall die*, come acknowledging yourſelves obnoxious to eternal death; which is neceſſary to accepting the grace that is in Jeſus Chriſt, *and there is none other name under heaven given among men whereby we* MUST *be ſaved.*

That we may be clear in the freeneſs of this grace, let us view the whole matter in it's origin:

God formed a being with a capacity of knowing him, and of regulating by that knowledge his moſt minute as well as grandeſt actions, ſo for man to enjoy unclouded bliſs in the ſplendours of the divine countenance. But being alſo endowed with a freedom of chuſing good or evil, he let himſelf be won to make choice of the evil; ſo fell from life in falling from God. And that this diſunion is matter of fact, reſults clearly from Jeſus's putting God and man in oppoſition: *Get thee behind me, Satan,* (ſays he;) *for thou ſavoureſt not the things that be of God, but the*

things that be of men: but were man, as created, the work of God in which he delights, the things of God, and the things of men, would be the ſame individual things. Now, (however) that the ſource was poiſoned, it could communicate nothing but poiſon; and 'twas righteous that the puniſhment of this black ſin ſhould, by the inevitable and eternal miſery of man and his deſcendents, be held forth to all God's intelligent creatures, rather than that the bountiful deſign of God in producing a happy creature parent of a happy race, ſhould, with any degree of impunity, be fruſtrated by the tranſgreſſion of that creature. Thus we find, that whatever God did in relief of the matter, proceeded from the meer motion of his free grace. Indeed it was, in one view, a moſt delicate dilemma; but the *only wiſe God* diſinvolved it.

In accommodation to human underſtanding, we muſt here uſe terms, perhaps, not ſtrictly proper, when applyed to the Deity; ſomewhat however, that was analagous, did paſs: for now God the Father propoſed the work of redemption to his only Son by ineffable generation; that the infinite merit of the oblation might atone the infinite blackneſs of creature-rebellion; and alſo as man had nothing to pay with, owing already to his maker all his after-performances. Now God the Son moſt graciouſly undertook the

the (dreadful, dreadful) work. Now the Holy Ghoſt, equal God, engaged to awaken men's attention to a Saviour that was to come, by giving holy perſons diſpatched for that purpoſe a great inſight into futurity, and the occaſional power of working miracles; by ſtirring up the human conſcience to a ſenſe of its guilt, and it's, naturally, loſt condition, that it might embrace the Saviour with an earneſt faith: and then he undertook to reſtore the ruined faculties of the ſoul, that we having power over ſin, and power to the performance of true virtue, might, in our meaſure, be perfect even like our heavenly father. Here are laid before you the ſeveral offices of the three diſtinct divine perſons, in whoſe names you were made members of the covenant of grace: and you are ſenſible no doubt, that God is too jealous of his honour to give it to another, by ſo claſſing inferior beings with his adored ſelf. O let us praiſe the three-one God with the moſt exerted ability of the whole ſoul.

Now Jehovah made known to the diſheartned rebels, that ſeed of the woman, which ſhould bruiſe the ſerpent's head. He in ſubſequent ages roſe up early, and ſent the prophets, one after another, to let in clearer and then clearer light, towards the diſcovery of a redeemer; till at laſt *Malachi* ſaid quite plain, *The Lord whom ye ſeek ſhall ſuddenly come to his temple, even the meſ-*

ſenger of the covenant whom ye delight in; behold he ſhall come, ſaith the Lord of Hoſts. We know he came, and continually inſtructed the creatures of his hand: we know his immovable requiſition notified to us by three evangeliſts, *Matthew*, *Mark* and *Luke*; when turning to the multitude, *He ſaid to them* ALL, *if any man will come after me, let him deny himſelf, take up his croſs daily, and follow me.* All works of wonder conjoint with beneficence, were wrought by him upon earth, and, in the iſſue of all, he underwent a death of moſt racking anguiſh for us miſerable ſinners. How can ye then hope to eſcape, if ye ſlight ſo great ſalvation? *O kiſs the ſon, leſt he be angry; if his wrath ſhould kindle, yea but a little; bleſſed are all they that put their truſt in him.* Cloſe thou in with his gracious terms, caſting away delay; repent thou and believe the goſpel; for if the precarious fluttering breath quit thy noſtrils ere this buſineſs is done, indeed there is no one can help thee. Ye ſhall every one lie down in ſorrow never, never, oh never to be abated. Go therefore all to him that ye may have life.——But if ſtill proud and vicious ye refuſe compliance, yet remember you are this time told, your damnation is upon your own heads.

Oh may the crucified God, whoſe ſpur in my heart urges on my labour day and night for you, operate good ſucceſs to this

this endeavour for your invaluable ſouls. No worldly views have I, no mixture of them towards you, neither good nor harm ye can do me, ſo ſeparate am I from all affairs of life. But my ſighs force themſelves out, God is witneſs, with hardly any interval for you, becauſe I know you are making an immortal nature wretched;—becauſe when a few more years are whirled round, ye ſhall come into that miſerable world (although the chriſtian's joyful hope,) where all the means of grace, and influences of the ſpirit of God will be for ever withdrawn, and the ſoul ſhall be given up to incurable wickedneſs and endleſs anguiſh; becauſe, albeit ſo dear to my maſter *Jeſus*, that he ſhed the blood of his heart for you, ye are exchanging the all of an eternity for ſhort ſpaces, and ſpurts of pleaſure, which yourſelves are incomparably ſurer will come to a perpetual end, than that you ſhall get into your beds to-night. But do not put the everlaſting *too-late* to your own moſt precious ſouls, for with bitter woe, indeed very bitter, ye will think of all this, *certainly* in the unalterable ſtate. My beloved fellow-creatures, I could die for you.—Do not bar out conviction: don't be deaf to a monitor whom purely the love of God in his Chriſt, and of Chriſt who is God, do indeed conſtrain to ſo earneſt an application.

But now, when the chriſtian religion appears invincibly true to my reaſon, are not my paſſions to make a party, and ſound the moſt vigorous alarm to myſelf and others? I want to ſee how they can intereſt themſelves enough; how glow with a flame adequate to the demand. Our fear, a forcible paſſion, is thrice in a paragraph, injoined by the Lord;—*I will forewarn you, whom you ſhall fear: fear him, who after he hath killed, hath power to caſt into hell; yea I ſay unto you, fear him.* The ſame inſtinct is vigorouſly excited, when his heart zealous to turn us from miſery we hurry into, dictated to his perſuading tongue, even for the fourth time, "That we had better part with poſſeſſions uſeful like members to us, *than go into hell, into the fire that never ſhall be quenched.*

Our joy, that welcome affection, may with reaſon be full; may run over; the beloved *Paul* well doubles his command, *Rejoice, and again I ſay, rejoice*;—when the Saviour himſelf aſſures us, we are incircled in omnipotent love, and can't ſuffer real damage, while ſhooting the dark gulf into the light of eternity;—*My ſheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me. And I give unto them eternal life, and they ſhall never periſh, neither ſhall any pluck them out of my hand. My Father which gave them me is greater than all; and none is able*

able to pluck them out of my father's hand. I and my father are one.

But are not our bowels to tremble, like a harp toucht with ſtrokes moſt acutely tender;—what penetrating emotions, of awe, of anguiſh, of joy, of love, ſhould be ours; while the Lord Jehovah is figured upon the croſs, *purchaſing his church with his own blood.* Is it nothing to all you that paſs by? Can it be enough to you? Look what God doth for thee. Thou wretch, look what thou doſt to God. And now, *though it be* very late, let thy hard heart relent: go thy way, and ſin no more. May God give my words to move you. Oh that they were capable of moving you. Poor men! If ye repent not, they will be ſucceeded, *yet a little while*, by dreadful deeds. But rather look, I ſay, *upon God in Chriſt reconciling the world to himſelf*, eye with boundleſs grief your Maker bleeding to death through your ſins; and for love, for ſhame, for fear—Oh ſin no more.

Having ſhown how our paſſions ought to be engaged in this cauſe, and placed my book (as I truſt) above the imputation of rant; I now ſhall handle ſome paſſages of evangelical hiſtory, and pour out all my ſoul for the God of my life without check, or apprehenſion. The divine mercy in all the ages of the world, ought to be recollected with profound gratitude. And that holy practice is well promoted by the

heavenly ſublimity, which ſtrikes in the opening of the beloved diſciple's goſpel: *In the beginning was the word, and the word was with God, and the word was God. The ſame was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him, and without him was not any thing made that was made.* [This perſonage died for us, and with HIM have we to do.] *In him was life: and the life,* which dwelt there, *was the light of men*; inaſmuch as the golden raies of reaſon and revelation, ſcatter'd more or leſs in the world every where, were by the glowing ſun of righteouſneſs ſhot into the mind. *And the light ſhineth in darkneſs; and the darkneſs comprehended it not:* effulgent Deity beamed in upon the moſt prejudiced underſtandings, but their groſs and heavy darkneſs oppoſed it's paſſage; and the ruling ſinfulneſs of mens hearts, prevented their ſo imbibing it's ſalutary dictates, as to proceed onward to happineſs, where this lamp of their paths would have lighted them. Therefore God in the latter days, graciouſly interpoſed by a compleater diſcovery of his will. FROM a ſuperannuate couple ſprung the renowned *Baptiſt*, ſo accurately marked out by *Iſaiah: The voice of him that crieth in the wilderneſs, prepare ye the way of the Lord, make ſtrait in the deſart a high way for our God. Every valley ſhall be exalted, and every mountain and hill ſhall be made low: and the crooked ſhall be*

made

made ſtrait, and the rough places plain. And the glory of the Lord ſhall be revealed, and all fleſh ſhall ſee it together: For the mouth of the Lord hath ſpoken it. Now the auſtere *John* took no more to himſelf than the office of a voice.

Moreover *Gabriel*, that highly favoured angel, is ſent to a virgin of the royal line, though in low life, to notify the ſpeedy encompaſſment of Deity in her womb. This virgin, named Mary, was contracted to *Joſeph*, alſo of the houſe of *David*; which was now ſo reduced, that here a prince of the blood followed the buſineſs of a carpenter. She, proſtrate in ſoul, acquieſced to the unequal'd honour with theſe words, *Behold the handmaid of the Lord; be it unto me according to thy word.* Afterwards *Mary*, to lay in vouchers for her character, made a viſit of long ſtay to her couſin *Elizabeth*, now advanced in her pregnancy of the miraculous *John*. At which interview the ſpirit Omnipotent made mighty ſigns glitter.

For the little *friend of the bridegroom*, from a *diſtance indeed* perceived our Lord's approach, and the lively wombſter gave a ſpring in his exultation. *Elizabeth* was directed to conſider it thus, for immediately filled with the Holy Ghoſt, ſhe ſpake in a ſacred tranſport, "*Bleſſed art thou among women:* thou art the greateſt and happieſt of thy ſex, and ſurely the moſt diſtinguiſh-

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ed of all creatures; *and* now into the duſt plunges my adoring ſoul, which with a broad intellect views *the fruit of thy womb*, God over all, bleſſed for evermore: *and whence is this to me, that the mother of my Lord ſhould come to me*, as a gueſt under my roof; to whom I ſhould rather have haſtened to pay my homage *. And that in thee is now incloſed the God of my rejoicing faculties, I know to the greateſt perfection; for as *ſoon as the firſt voice of thy ſalutation ſounded in my ears, the babe* with an unknown vigour *leaped in my womb for joy:* which I am taught by a divine impreſſion to regard as a homage to the lord of nature, and an alacrity to meet the meſſenger of the covenant, before whoſe face he is to go, to make diſpoſition for his coming. And when I conſider the matter overſhoots all human comprehenſion, and it was never known from the foundation of the world, that a woman ſhould be big without the concurrence of a man, I am compel'd to ſay, *happy is ſhe who* ſo readily *believed* what to ſenſe appeared utterly incredible, and did not even requeſt a miraculous ſign of it: for ſurely there ſhall be an exact accompliſhment of all the things, which were ſignify'd to her from the Lord." And *Mary* winging the heights

* I do here once for all, acknowledge the greateſt obligations to the *Family Expoſitor*, by that learned ſaint, the late Dr. *Doddridge* of *Northampton*.

heights of thankful jubilation, and having her mental view ſupernaturally aſſiſted, ſaid aloud, " *My ſoul doth magnify*, and juſtly boaſts in *the Lord, my ſpirit hath rejoiced in God* as *my ſaviour*; who from the throne of immenſity has glanced grace upon aſhes, and (I truſt) is granting me my own ſhare in that goſpel, which by the appearance of this his ſon he is ſending to ſo many others; a ſalvation glorioufly proportionate to all my infinite wants. *He has confer'd ſuch diſtinguiſhed honour upon me, that* I am fully perſuaded, according to his word by the angel, *not only the preſent age, but all future generations ſhall pronounce me bleſſed*; *for he that is mighty*, the being who has original might and is all in all, *hath done theſe inconceivable things for me: holy* and alſo hallowed *is his name*; innumerable bands of angels and perfected ſpirits, are inceſſantly melted down in his ſweet glorification: let our accents (as mortality can) ſwell the grand chorus. Truth is his nature; there muſt then be a performance of all he hath promiſed, and I cannot ſuſpect it in the leaſt. *His mercy* alſo has in every age been the ſtay of his people, and well know I, it *is from generation to generation upon them that fear him*, that bow their ſouls ſincerely to his ſupreme majeſty. *God hath ſhown where dwells ſtrength by* the overturnings of *his arm*; *hath routed the proud thro' the very ſchemes they*

they confided in for their triumph. He has lowered inthroned ones to flying with a frighted foot *, *and* by his interposing providence *has exalted the depreſt*, from their obſcureſt ſtate, as now he is doing with reſpect to me. *The craving bowels he hath nouriſhed* with fat products of the ground; *but the great-eſtated* epicure, who ranſacked earth, air, and ſea, for a ſucceſſive courſe of dainties, *he hath ſent away ſick with hunger.* And ſee moſt gloriouſly exemplify'd the condeſcenſion and power of our God: for though from ancient grandeur we are ſunk to ſo low an ebb, *he hath ſuccoured his ſervant Iſrael, in remembrance of his* everlaſting *mercy*; *even as he proteſted to our fathers*; *to Abraham and his ſeeed, throughout all generations:* and we, of theſe promiſes happy heirs, are now going to behold the fulfilment, in it's unmeaſurable extent, and all it's ſparkling glory."

Mary ſtaid after this three months with her couſin, who drew near the time of her delivery, *and then returned to her own houſe*, where ſhe lived in abſolute privacy; yet not forgetting, though ſhe concealed this rapturous

* 'Tis hoped the unexactneſs of the verſion in this, and ſome other places, will be excuſed; becauſe paraphraſed, the compoſition had been tedious; and not paraphraſed, it would have ſuffered from obſcurity. Then too, the ſenſe of ſcripture is faithfully preſerved; and what is added muſt be inferred therefrom.

rapturous inſpiration, and all the other events; which burned like glowing embers in her thoughtful mind.

NOW in the night, an angel, who in his paſſage caſt a light over the ſky, *ſignified our Saviour's birth to certain pious ſhepherds, and the glory of the Lord filled the place:* WHICH had in former ages been the uſual ſymbol of the divine preſence. *Here* at ſo awful an appearance, though indeed the mens minds were ſtaid upon God, *nature could not but be exceedingly terrified*; and while aſtoniſhment held their eyes on the ſtrain, and kept their lips diſſevered, *the angel ſays unto them in the moſt condeſcending manner*; "*Fear not by any means, O ye ſhepherds*; I am the beſt meſſenger ever ſent to human creatures, and *bring you tidings of unparallelled joy*; *which ſhall now be occaſioned*, not *to* you only, but *the whole Jewiſh nation*; *nor to them alone, but to the collective body of mankind. For on this true feſtival there is born to you a ſaviour*, reſplendent every way with raies of unmatchable glory, *no other than Chriſt the Lord*, whom you have ſo long been taught to expect under the character of the MESSIAH: he is this moment come into the world, *in yonder neighbouring city of his father David*, and I am diſpatched to you, that ye might pay him the firſt homage from any but kindred. *Shout then, daughter of Jeruſalem, behold, thy king cometh to thee lowly. And, O ſhepherds,*

here

here is a direction for you; you will find him an infant in ſwaddling-bands, lying in a manger belonging to one of the Inns.

And there was immediately with the angel, a multitude of the heavenly hoſt praiſing their eternal king in words, that twanged of the celeſtial harmony, *ſaying, glory be to God in the higheſt* heavens. O mount up, ye *ſeraphim*, and ſtrain to the ſummit of ardent praiſe: *For* by the unſpeakable divine condeſcenſion, *peace with God,—Godlike holineſs,* —— felicity from the ſpring of felicity, deſcend *through a redeemer*, to this polluted, and miſerable *earth*; yea ſuperſurpaſſing beneficence is in exerciſe towards the ſinners of men, who viewed in this Saviour become objects of God's complacential delight. Eccho it back, O ye mortal abodes, to ours! On earth peace! Benevolence and favour to men.

CHAP. III.

Extract from Paſchal's Thoughts. *Free Will and Free Grace ſcripturally adjuſted.* Chriſt *miraculouſly healing and feeding his creatures. The reſurrection of* Lazarus.

MY purpoſe is not to follow my maſter from the manger to the ſepulcher, but ſelect ſome occurrences in his day,

day, whence he will appear to be *the way, the truth, and the life.* What ſaith to us our Maker *Who is the life?* "*Verily, verily, except a man be born into a new world* (as by ſanctification,) *he cannot ſee the kingdom of God.*" And "*except ye be converted* from fleſhly aims, *and become as little children* in ſimplicity, in a teachable temper, and an indifference to the great things of the preſent life, *ye ſhall not enter into the kingdom of heaven.*"

The miſerable error of ſlighting this kingdom is by *a demonſtrating head* (the penetrating *Paſchal,*) brought to ſtrict numerical proof. There is ſmall room for altering Dr. *Kennet*'s verſion; which I here give.

"Unity joined to infinity increaſes it not, any more than a foot-meaſure added to an infinite ſpace. What is finite vaniſhes before that which is infinite and becomes as nothing. Thus our underſtanding in reſpect of God's: thus human juſtice compared with the divine. Nay, the diſproportion between unity and infinity in general, is not ſo vaſt, as that between man's righteouſneſs and the righteouſneſs of God *.

We know that there is an infinite, but are ignorant of it's nature. For inſtance; we

* The reaſon is, becauſe the imperfection of man's righteouſneſs makes it (ſtrictly) no righteouſneſs: but an unit is in ſtrictneſs a conſtituent of number.

we know it to be falſe, that numbers are finite: there muſt therefore be an infinity in number. But what this is we know not. It can neither be equal nor unequal, becauſe unity added to it alters not it's condition. Thus we may very well know there is a God without comprehending what God is: and by no means ought you to conclude againſt the exiſtence of God, from your imperfect conceptions of his eſſence.

For your conviction, I ſhall not call in the teſtimony of faith, which gives us ſo certain an aſſurance of it; nor even make uſe of the ordinary proofs, becauſe theſe you are unwilling to receive. I ſhall argue with you only upon your own terms; and doubt not, from the method in which you reaſon every day, concerning things of the ſmalleſt importance, to make it appear after what manner you ought to reaſon in the preſent caſe,—to *which ſide* you ſhould incline in deciding this queſtion of the higheſt importance, about the exiſtence of God, *with all it's conſequences*. You alledge then we are incapable of knowing whether God is. Yet this remains certain, that either God is, or is not, and that there can be no medium in the caſe. Which part then ſhall we chuſe? Reaſon (ſay you) is not a proper judge of this point. There is an infinite chaos or gulph fixed between us. We play, as it were, at croſs

and

and pile, for an uncertainty immenſely remote from our conception. What will you wager? Reaſon can *affirm* neither the one nor the other: reaſon can *deny* neither the one nor the other. Do not be forward then, in accuſing thoſe of error and falſity who have already choſe their ſide: for you confeſs yourſelf not to know whether they have, indeed, acted imprudently, and made an ill choice. No, you will ſay, but I ſhall take the freedom to cenſure them ſtill, not for making this choice, but for making any: he that takes croſs, and he that takes pile, are both in the wrong; the right had been not to wager at all. Nay, but there is a neceſſity of wagering; the thing is placed beyond the indifference of your will; you are embarked in the cauſe, and by not laying that God is, you in effect lay that he is not. Which ſide will you take? Let us balance the gain and the loſs of ſticking to the affirmative. If you gain, you gain all; it is meer nothing that is loſt. Be quick therefore, and take this ſide without demur. Well: I confeſs I ought to lay: but may not I lay too much? Suppoſing the chance to be the ſame, you would not refuſe to ſtake one life againſt two. And in caſe there were ten for you to win, you muſt be much more imprudent not to hazard one life againſt ten, at a game where the caſt was even. But here there is an infinite number

of

of lives infinitely happy to be won, upon an equal throw; and the ſtake you venture is ſo petty a thing, and of ſo very ſhort continuance, that it would be ridiculous for you to ſhow your good huſbandry on this occaſion. For you ſay nothing when you urge, it is uncertain whether you win, and that it is certain you muſt venture; and that the infinite diſtance between the certainty of venturing, and the uncertainty of winning, makes the finite good you certainly expoſe, equal to the infinite you uncertainly purſue. This is all deception: every gameſter ſtakes what is certain againſt what is uncertain, and yet this venturing a finite certainty for a finite uncertainty never diſparages his reaſon. Again; It is falſe that there is an infinite diſtance between the certainty of what we venture and the uncertainty of what we hope to win. Indeed, the *certainty of winning* and the *certainty of loſing* are infinitely diſtant. But as for the uncertainty on the winning hand, it is ſuch as fairly balances the certainty of what we venture, according to the uſual proportion in the games of chance. Suppoſe therefore, there are as many chances on one ſide, as on the other, the game is even; and thus the certainty of our venture is but equal to the uncertainty of our prize, ſo far ought we to be from ſuppoſing an infinite diſtance between them. So that, on the whole,

whole; if we ſtake a finite, where there is a plain equality as to winning or loſing, and where that which may be won is infinite, the argument cannot but be of infinite force. We have * here a demonſtration before us; and if men are not incapable of all truth, they cannot remain inſenſible of this." But if we will turn away our minds from the conſideration of it, that is at our own peril; for our Free Will ſhall not be violated.——And here it ſeems proper to ſettle this matter upon it's ſcriptural footing, that we may conceive rightly of the freedom of will belonging to man ſince the miſerable fall of *Adam*.

Juſtin Martyr, in the perſon of the early chriſtians, refutes with all his might in his ſucceſsful apology, the charge of their holding ſuch a predeſtination, as, however by unnatural explications it may be ſoftened, in truth neceſſitates men, on the one hand to be holy, on the other to be wicked. I ſhall cite the author's words at the bottom of the page, that the reader may judge whether the ſubſtance of the paſſage is altered, or at all wreſted; though indeed I take all liberty with the ſtyle, and render the ſenſe much in a paraphraſtic way.

"Now

* Though Dr. *Kennet* has rendered it in words expreſſive of ſome doubt; "*We here ſeem to have*, &c." yet the correct author left it in poſitive language; "*Cela eſt demonſtratif*." Which means, "This is demonſtrative." And ſo it is in truth.

"Now (ſays *the apologiſt*) we will diſſolve immediately an objection ariſing from ſuch a train of predictions and correſponding events; namely, that this whole affair becauſe predicted, is predetermined ſo to be; that even men's moral characters are efficaciouſly and uncontroulably deſtined to be good or bad, without any concurrence of their *(truely free)* will. No, we ſay, there is nothing of this: for a predicter is not maker of the futurity: but that futurity, which, if no one had foretold it, would yet remain to be, affords the prophet a cauſe of predicting. This is all the matter. And in agreement with ſuch a rational ſyſtem, you may hear the prophets throughout their writings proclaim (a truth, which we chriſtians as conſtantly profeſs,) that rewards and puniſhments ſhall hereafter be dealt to all perſons, exactly as their works in life have been. But if there is a neceſſitating predeſtination, ſuch retribution will be an abſurd procedure; for a judiciary ſentence cannot, without mockery, paſs upon thoſe, who had not at the time of acting a ſolid ability of chooſing either the commanded, or the forbidden part. Interpret the word *Predeſtination* as ſome do, that in conſequence of God's arbitrary election, men are either irreſiſtibly regenerated and influenced to be good, or being left of God to their helpleſs fallen nature, are neceſſitated, do

as

as they will, to be bad; then in ſuch a ſituation one man is in no wiſe approvable, and another is not blamable. It matters not a ruſh, that the people of God are *willing* in the day of his power, if their nature is compelled to be ſo.

No: except mankind have a perfectly free option, in flying moral turpitude, and embracing moral beauty, they are not chargeable with whatever actions may be done, have no concern but as ſuffering parties in them at all. But that man by his voluntary determination, does direct his goings aright, or elſe wanders from the appointed path, we have this way of ſhowing: The ſame perſon makes tranſitions from the ſpecies of good actions to their oppoſite ſpecies. Whereas was all but one onward ſtream of deſtiny, man could not receive counter-tending determinations of his will. Or here we ſhould gain another ſuperiority by arguing, that deſtiny croſs-acted its own impreſſions and biaſſes: ſo one and t'other way the predeſtinarians are drove to an abſurdity, which muſt make them give up their hypotheſis, or totally renounce their claim to reaſon *.

The

* Ὅπως δὲ μὴ τινες ἐκ τῶν προλελεγμένων ὑφ' ἡμῶν δοξάσωσι, καθ' εἱμαρμένης ἀνάγκην φάσκειν ἡμᾶς τὰ γινόμενα γινεσθαι, ἐκ τῦ προειπεῖν προεγνωσμένα, και τυτο διαλύομεν. Τὰς τιμωρίας καὶ τὰς κολάσεις, καὶ τὰς ἀγαθὰς ἀμοιβὰς, κατ' ἀξίαν τῶν πραξεῶν ἑκαστ ἀποδιδοσθαι διὰ τῶν προφητῶν μαθόντες,

The ſpirit of truth by *Moſes*; teaches us not as they do, "*I call* (ſays he) *heaven and earth to record this day againſt you, that I have ſet before you life and death, bleſſing and curſing: therefore chooſe life, that both thou and thy ſeed may live.* With the moſt earneſt tenderneſs God calls out to his creatures "*Waſh you, make you clean, put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes, ceaſe to do evil, learn to do well, relieve the oppreſt, judge the fatherleſs, plead for the widow. Come now and let us reaſon together, ſaith the Lord: though your ſins are as ſcarlet, they ſhall be white as ſnow; though like crimſon for redneſs, they ſhall become fair as wool. If ye be willing and obedient, ye ſhall eat the good of the land. But if ye refuſe and rebel, ye ſhall be devoured with the ſword; for the mouth of the Lord hath ſpoken it.* And he ſwears to it upon his eternity in *Ezekiel*; "*As I live (ſaith the Lord;) I have no pleaſure in the death of the wicked, but that the*

θόνιες, καὶ αληθὲς ἀποφαινόμεθα. Ἐπει εἰ μὴ τέλο ἐϛιν, ἀλλὰ καθ' εἰ μαρμένεν πάνια γίνεϛαι, ὅτε τὸ ἐφ' ἡμῖν ἐϛὶν ὅλως. Εἰ γὰρ ἔμαρϛαι τόν δέ τινα ἀγαθὸν εἶναι, καὶ τόνδε φαῦλον, ἔθ' ἕλος ἀποδέκλος, ὐδε ἐκεῖνος μεμπλέος. Καὶ αὖ, εἰ μὴ προαιρέσει ἐλευθέρᾳ πρὸς τὸ φεύγειν τὰ αἰσχρὰ, καὶ αἱρεῖδαι τὰ καλὰ, δύναμὶν ἔχει τὸ ανθρώπειον γένος, ἀναίτιον ἐϛι τῶν ὁπωϛδήποτε πραττομένων. Ἀλλ' ὅτι ἐλευθέρᾳ προαιρέσει καὶ καλορθοῖ, καὶ σφάλλεϊαι, ἔτως ἀποδείκνυμεν. τὸν αὐ'ὸν ἄνθρωπον τῶν ἐναν'ίων τῇ μιϊλέλευσιν ποιέμενον ὁρῶμεν. Εἰ δὲ εἱμαρϛο, ἢ φαῦλον, ἢ σπκδαῖον εἶναι, ὐκ ἂν πόλε τῶν ἐναν'ίων δεκλικὸς ἦν, καὶ πλειϛάκις μέλελ.θέλο. Ἀλλ' ἐδ' οἱ μὲν ἦσαν σπυδαῖοι, εἰ δὲ φαῦλοι, ἐπεῖ τῇ εἱμαρμένεν αἰτίαν φαύλων, καὶ ἐναν'ία ἐαν'ῇ πράττσσαν αποφαινόμεθα.

the wicked turn from his way and live. Turn ye, turn ye, from your evil ways; for why will ye *die, O houſe of Iſrael* *."

But it is neceſſary to find out a harmony between theſe ſcriptures and ſuch as " *It is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleaſure.*" and " *Thy people ſhall be willing in the day of thy power.*" Now here's the natural agreement: man has truly a free will which his Maker requires of him; not a will attended with effectual power; ſuch as he enjoyed before the cataſtrophe of his fall; but a volition that is weak and ineffectual. This will, however, the Lord demands at his hands; and when it is ſurrendered up, God gives the effectual will, which prevails unto action. But otherwiſe; it is the divine determination *not to beſtow it.* In conſonance with this, *God on earth did not many mighty works in Galilee, becauſe of their unbelief.* To his power they were *equally* practicable: which appeared

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* Εδίδαξε δὲ ἡμᾶς ταῦτα τὸ ἅγιον προφήτικὸν πνεῦμα, διὰ Μωσέως;---" ἰδὲ πρὸ προσώπε σε τὸ ἀγαθὸν καὶ τὸ κακὸν; ἔκλεξαι τὸ ἀγαθὸν." Καὶ πάλιν διὰ Ησαΐε τῦ ἑτέρε προφήτε, ὡς ἀπὸ τῦ παντὸς τῶν ὅλων καὶ δεσπότε Θεῦ εἰς τῦτο λεχθῆναι ἔτως· " λέσασθε, καθαροὶ γίνεσθε, ἀφέλετε τὰς πονηρίας ἀπὸ τῶν ψυχῶν ὑμῶν, μάθετε καλὸν ποιεῖν· κρίνατε ὀρφανῷ, καὶ δικαιώσατε χήραν, καὶ δεῦτε καὶ διαλεχθῶμεν, λέγει Κύριος; καὶ ἐὰν ὦσιν αἱ ἁμαρτίαι ὑμῶν ὡς φοινικῆν, ὡσεὶ ἔριον λευκανῶ, καὶ ἐὰν ὦσιν ὡς κόκκινον, ὡς χιόνα λευκανῶ. Καὶ ἐὰν θέλητε, καὶ εἰσακύσητέ με, τὰ ἀγαθὰ τῆς γῆς φάγεσθε· ἐὰν δὲ μὴ εἰσακύσητέ με, μάχαιρα ὑμᾶς καταφάγεται· τὸ γὰρ στόμα Κυρίε ἐλάλησε ταῦτα."

peared in the creation of an ear to *Malchus*, without the leaſt faith, or requiſition of faith, in the party made whole. But the afflicted father, who in order to his ſon's being recovered, was to have faith in *Chriſt*, cried out "*Lord, I believe; help thou my unbelief:*" EFFICACIOUS *faith* therefore, *is not of ourſelves, it is the gift of God*, who adds an operative will to our powerleſs volition, *Now it is manifeſt* how his people ſhould be willing in the day of his power; even *effectually willing*. The reader will perceive that the following liſt of texts is only reconcileable upon this interpretation:

Turn ye unto him from whom the children of Iſrael have ſo deeply revolted: [Iſai. xxxi. 6.] *Turn thou us unto thee, O Lord, and ſo ſhall we be turned:* [Lamentations v. 21.]

Caſt away from you all your tranſgreſſions whereby you have tranſgreſt: [Ezek. xviii. 31.] *God will turn again, he will have compaſſion upon us,* HE WILL SUBDUE OUR INIQUITIES: [Mic. vii. 19.]

Bring forth fruits worthy of repentance: [Luke iii. 8.] *Lord, thou wilt ordain peace for us;* FOR THOU ALSO HAST WROUGHT ALL OUR WORKS IN US. [Iſai. xxvi. 12.]

Make you a new heart and a new ſpirit: [Ezek. xviii. 31.] *A new heart will* I *give you, and a new ſpirit will* I *put within you:* [ſays Ezekiel in the perſon of the Almighty, xxxvi. 26.]

Now:

Now: *known unto God are all his works from the beginning of the world.* And upon what occaſion were theſe words ſpoken? This it was: the apoſtles and elders met together at *Jeruſalem*, to debate the liberty of the *Gentile* converts. In which council St. James cited in favour of thoſe converts, a prophecy delivered by Amos; "*After thoſe times I will return, and will build again the tabernacle of David, which is fallen down: and I will build again the ruins thereof, and I will ſet it up: that the reſidue of men might ſeek after the Lord, and all the Gentiles, upon whom my name is called, ſaith the Lord, who doth theſe things:* then follow the words; *known unto God are all his works.* It is plain the apoſtle does not ſpeak of God's works in the natural world, (as *Doddridge* obſerves; which had been nothing at all to his preſent purpoſe, but of *his diſpenſations* towards the children of men. Now he could not *know theſe*, without knowing the character and actions of particular perſons; on a correſpondence to which, the wiſdom and goodneſs of thoſe diſpenſations is founded. Thus, for inſtance; he muſt have known there would be Gentile idolaters (a thing as dependent on the freedom of the human mind, as any event we can imagine,) or he could not have known, that he would call them into his church. This text therefore muſt remain an unanſwerable proof, amongſt a

thouſand more from the word of God that the ſupreme Being *certainly foreknows future contingencies. Now* can a man be at a loſs to underſtand "*Whom God did foreknow, he alſo did predeſtinate to be conformed to the image of his Son?*" He infallibly foreknew their characters; knew that upon a right determination of their free wills, they would be objects, through Chriſt, of his favourable regards: and thus, poſſeſſing thoughts of everlaſting complacency towards them, God predeſtinated them to ſtand in a peculiar relation to the great redeemer, and be faſhioned *in due time*, to a conformity with the image of that his bleſſed Son, now exalted high above all heavens: for which end he preappointed to *moſt of them*, a chain of events in this life, diſtreſsful to ſenſe indeed, and ſharp; but which ſhould purge them like gold ſeven times refined through the melting furnace; that having *in the temper of Chriſt ſuffered with Chriſt*, they may reign with that king of kings refulgently for ever. It is obvious to expound "*Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the father*" after the ſame way. And now what ground is there for running mad, or for running wanton, upon the ſtrength of theſe ſcriptures? Oh that men might no more *wreſt them to their own deſtruction!* Oh that the ſticklers for *Calvin* might open their eyes and relent!—they who make *the father of the ſpirits of all fleſh*, a moſt irrational

onal and boundleſs executioner, little weighing, that had not the *primitive chriſtians*, who with abhorrence diſclaimed ſuch a notion, ſtood firm to the cuſtody of the Bible in a ſea of their blood, we ſhould not at this day, have poſſeſt a goſpel to exert our black fancies upon.

It is impoſſible to diſembarraſs every text perverted by *Calviniſts*. The reader has a maſter key in his hand, which will open ſuch a place as "*God has mercy on whom he will have mercy.*" I ſhall only add this eminent paſſage with the *Family Expoſitor*'s note: "*In whom* (Jeſus) *alſo we have obtained an inheritance, being predeſtinated according to the purpoſe of him, who worketh all things after the counſel of his own will* (l)."

(l) This does indeed expreſs God's taking ſuch methods to anſwer his purpoſes, as he knows will in fact be ſucceſsful; but it does not prove any thing like an overbearing impulſe on mens minds, to determine them in ſuch a manner as to deſtroy the natural freedom of their volitions, and ſo to prevent their being juſtly accountable to God for ſuch actions." This concluſion I draw from what hath been evinced:

The effectual turning of the heart from ſin to holineſs, is the adorable operation of divine power and grace alone, in the human ſoul: but man being an intelligent voluntary agent, and under the common motions of the ſpirit of grace, has a power to uſe means God bleſſes for obtaining regeneration; ſuch as prayer, reading, reflexion. And if with diligence and

NOTHING now calls me away from ſome paſſages of my adored maſter and ſpouſe's life:

And how can the minds of creatures operate with more benefit and pleaſure, than to ſee their incarnate God exert the boundleſs compaſſion of his heart, in touching the maimed into entireneſs, the blind into *inſtant ſun-enduring* ſight, the deaf into quickneſs of gladſome hearing: ſo the new-made arm forms a motion towards it's incarnate creator; the awe-expreſſing eye faſtens it's firſt beams upon it's meek reſtorer; the juſt-opened ear moſt deeply imbibes his life-giving words. For while Jeſus was ſeated on the mountain nigh the ſea of *Galilee*, *there came to him great multitudes*, *having* brought along *with them their dumb*, *their lame*, *their blind*, *and many others* who had different complaints, *and they caſt them at the Lord's feet*, intreating his compaſſion, which failed not to operate on ſuch occaſions, *and he healed them all.* The very air rejoiced, and blew ſweeter; nature all jubilated to the beneficent Creator: and ſo numerous, and in ſuch great variety were the diſplays of his power in the cures he wrought, *that the whole multitude was utterly amazed*, *when they heard the*

and perſeverance he makes uſe of thoſe means, there is no doubt but he ſhall be born of God, made a partaker of grace here, and glory hereafter. Thus ſalvation is of God, and condemnation of ourſelves.

the dumb dilating with a flow of ſpeech, to their allmighty helper, and every new-created, or reſtored organ firſt finding it's uſe in an expreſſion of acknowledgment to him. *And* ſtruck with theſe many delightful miracles, *they glorified the God of Iſrael*, who had raiſed up ſo illuſtrious a prophet to his people, and given open reſtoration to afflicted creatures, whom no human power could have reached. The ſeaſon was favourable, and who could quit this miraculous operator, and his divine ſermons? The people ſtaid two of thoſe ſhort light nights, and three days, in the open fields, (being in *ſome degree* miraculouſly ſuſtained,) without conſidering ſo as to be ſenſible of the neceſſities of nature. But theſe wants were not thus unattended to by their all-pondering inſtructor, who exactly knew when the ſprings of life needed to be wound up afreſh. Behold our Creator making us ſit down in ranks upon the flowery verdure, and *in perſon* multiplying a pittance of proviſion unto our abundant ſuſtentation. O ſweet and ſafe meal! Table certainly no *ſnare* to the modeſt feeders! But here the Deity comes from behind the curtain: make haſte, atheiſts, and ye deiſts, to *know the only true God, and Jeſus Chriſt whom he hath ſent.*

Let our mental eye view the crowd about our Lord on this mountain, all on a glow with his infinite majeſty; a circle, not of ſupple courtiers, but of happy-re-

flecting creatures, who without any dangerous or painful operation, found themſelves in a moment *whole*, or *hale*, beyond all efforts of nature, and proſpects of the moſt ſanguin hope. Let meditation have ſally on our Lord's correſpondent delight in beholding theſe grateful and aſtoniſhed beings. Here, ye ſlaughtering monarchs, ſee the trophies of real greatneſs. If *ye* weep not over your own ſucceſſes, the hero muſt have ſuppreſt the man in you: but gladſome drops only ſteal down at this wonderful time. The ſubjects on whom theſe miracles were wrought, are long ſince diſſolved into their conſtituent elements. But the conqueror of the gloomy grave ſparkles with more laſting, and nobler ſpoils: ſo may our grateful ſouls, oh Jeſus, in a conſciouſneſs of forgiven ſins, and of unknown moral vigour, bid hoſannah to thee our all-potent deliverer. So, Lord, mayſt thou ſurvey us with ſatiſfaction as *the travail of thy ſoul*, in THAT MOUNTAIN OF GOD; where we hope to offer thee worthier praiſes, and for ever devote to thy ſervice the powers thou haſt reſcued, from diſhonour, weakneſs, and final perdition.

WE have noticed the incarnate God whoſe throne is for ever, ſpeaking a ſtump into a ſpread of fingers moving in well oiled ſockets. We have ſeen his puiſſant will bring into being a vaſt quantity of ready-

ready-baked bread: two demonſtrations, there is no need of preexiſtent matter for the Deity to operate upon. We ſhall next obſerve in *Lazarus*'s reſurrection, which I meditate at preſent to exhibit, the jellying juices of a dead dody, ſpoken immediately into a healthy circulation, and the ſprings of this intelligent ſyſtem recalled from a diſſolving ſtate into inſtant agency.

While Jeſus remained on the other ſide *Jordan*, whither this ſin-removing lamb was by his mad enemies driven; *there was one Lazarus of Bethany, the town of Mary and Martha her ſiſter, who* lay ill of a very dangerous diſtemper. Now, that the reader may enter into the character of a principal actor, I ſhall digreſs a little from the hiſtory to acquaint him, *this was the ſame Mary, on whom afterwards*, at a publick entertainment, *a grateful temper wrought to the pouring out that rich ointment, upon the feet of the reclined Jeſus, which ſhe had before waſhed with her tears*; laborious, lovely feet; which climbed the mountain, that the words of eternal life might be audible to ignorant multitudes: feet, which there pierced ſome ſolitary receſs, where he interceeded for mankind with his father *who heard him always*; and that carried him about every where indefatigably doing good. Now, *this pious deed done, the ſoul-penetrated woman bowed down and wiped them purely dry with her long fine hair,*

while the air of the houſe floated with the breathing balm. [John xii. 3.] *This perſon's brother, Lazarus, was ſick at this time. The ſiſters therefore,* full of concern for their amiable relation, and *knowing where Jeſus was, ſent to him, and ſaid,* "*Lord,* we beg thou wouldſt indulge us a viſit, whatever difficulties may lie in the way; for (oh may it move thee) *Lazarus thy friend is* ſo exceedingly *ill,* that unleſs thou interpoſeſt, nothing but death is to be expected.

But when Jeſus was informed of it, he ſaid, this ſickneſs is not to death, I aſſure you. It only tends to an illuſtration of the glory of God, and is ſuffered to prevail, *that God's ſon may be magnified by it,* and his divine miſſion ſignally confirmed.

Now it was well known, *Jeſus loved Martha and her ſiſter Mary, with their brother,* who all ſeem to have been eunuchs * for the kingdom of heaven's ſake. He often had viſited and taken a lodging with them, diſcovering a particular affection for this hoſpitable and humble family; and now was determined to order this affair in ſuch a manner, as he knew would turn moſt to their final benefit, tho' it might for a while occaſion greater ſorrow. *Therefore after the information, Jeſus abode two days in the place where he was. But the next day he ſays to his diſciples-*

* The Greek etymology only ſignifies *poſſeſſor of a well diſpoſed and ſerene mind.*

cipies, let us go back again to Judea." *They make anſwer,* " *Rabbi, it is but juſt now the Jews ſought to ſtone thee, and wilt thou* ſo ſoon *go thither again,* as it were to tempt the danger, from which thou made'ſt ſuch a narrow eſcape." *Jeſus replied, are there not twelve hours in the day? Now if any man uſe the opportunity of them to walk after his affairs, he does not ſtumble at every obſtacle that may lie a-croſs his path, becauſe he ſees the ſun above the horizon,* which *is the light of this world. But if a man will perſiſt to go out at night, it is no wonder if he knocks himſelf on the head then, for there is no light in the air around him.* As for me: my deſire inwardly glows to do God's will, taking the time of life's ſhort day, as I lately told you: [*John* ix. 4.] And I doubt not but I ſhall thereby approve myſelf in his ſight, and ſecure his protection and favour.

Theſe things ſaid Jeſus to ſilence their objections: but afterwards, upon conſciouſneſs of what had paſt at *Bethany*, tho' ſo many miles diſtant, THIS WISDOM OF THE FATHER declares, *Our friend Lazarus is fallen aſleep; but I am going to his houſe, that I may awaken him.* By which Jeſus, tho' indirectly, acquainted them with his death, and modeſtly intimated the glorious reſurrection he deſigned to effect. *His diſciples,* however, *immediately ſaid, If Lazarus ſleeps,* his blood flows with natural gentleneſs in it's channels, and *he will do well again. Then*

Jeſus

Jeſus to put an end to their ſuſpenſe, *ſpoke plainly*; *Lazarus is dead, and I am glad on your account I was not there*; for I could not have permitted this in my preſence; but now it is happened, you will find a mighty confirmation of your faith, in a diſplay of my divine ability, exceeding in ſome reſpects all you have yet ſeen. *But let us now go* directly *to Bethany. Then Thomas, alſo called Didymus, ſaid to his fellow-diſciples* and brethren in the apoſtolick office, *Since our dear maſter will expoſe himſelf to his inhuman enemies in Judea, let us go too, though it be only that we may die with him.* And, O bleſſed *Jeſus*, give the writer and reader of this to judge it far better, to die *with* and *for* thee, than to prolong, if it were in our power, wretched days of abſence, of meanneſs, of repeated diſconſolation.

When our Lord came near the village, he found Lazarus had been in the tomb four days. Now Bethany was not quite two miles from Jeruſalem; where the deceaſed was well known, and had acquired many friends. *Not a few therefore of the Jews who dwelt there*, when the funeral was over, *came to Martha and Mary, to condole them for the loſs of their brother.* And *Jeſus* no ſooner reached the neighbourhood, but news was ſwiftly carried to the family, who had ſigh'd ſo long for his preſence. *Martha therefore, when ſhe heard the maſter was coming,*

ing, went out that moment to meet him; but Mary, who *ſat weeping* with her friends in *private*, did not yet gain intelligence of his approach. *The ſiſter finding Jeſus, ſaid*, with a half-ſmothered ſigh, *to him; Lord*, permit me to tell you, we have been much ſurprized at your delay; and cannot but be exceedingly troubled at it, that you did not immediately take notice of the meſſage we ſent you; *for* ſurely *if thou hadſt been here, my dear brother had not died*, but would have been reſtored at thy prayer, which in ſo many inſtances has prevailed, even for ſtrangers. *But even now I know, that whatſoever thou ſhalt pleaſe to aſk of God*, (ſuch is his complacency in thee his beloved ſon) *the ſupreme Being will* aſſuredly *give it thee*, how great ſoever be the favour.—— If there is any way to repair the melancholy loſs we have ſuſtained. *Jeſus* beholding her by grief cut to pieces, *ſays with a compaſſionate concern, Martha, do not be diſconſolate upon this account; for I give you my word, your brother ſhall riſe again from the dead.* She now diſcerning a glimmer of hope, but purſuing further confirmation, *anſwers him, Lord, I extremely well know, my brother ſhall quit the tomb in the reſurrection-day*, but that diſtant view will not pacify my woe. Upon this *Jeſus ſaid*, elevate your ſoul to faith in your Redeemer. All the ſprings of being are contained in me. No other but *I am the reſurrection and the life:* by my agency

agency the general reſurrection ſhall be accompliſhed; a moſt glorious life ſhall be given and for ever maintained to all my people. *He therefore who believes in me,—though that believer die, yet ſhall he ere long recover exiſtence*, and his body will be reunited to that ſoul, which in the ſeparate ſtate, retains it's dependence upon my faithfulneſs, and ability. And e'en at preſent I can looſe the bonds of death, and recal the lamented *Lazarus* when I pleaſe to life. *Moreover I aſſure you, every one now living, who has that lively faith in me, ſhall never die.* Death ſhall be ſo diſarmed and transformed, it will ſcarce deſerve the name; the better part of the deceaſed being ſtrait conveyed to the abodes of glory, and the corrupted clay only repoſing a while in the duſt, 'till I at my return awaken it to never-decaying vigour and vivacity. *Is this your faith?" Martha with a moſt humble, and lively look replys, yes, Lord; I believe* all power and felicity are inherent in thee, which thou wilt now and evermore impart to thy living members, as they all are able to bear: for *thou art the Chriſt, the Son of God, who ſhould come into the world. When Martha had confeſt her faith* in this noble manner, *Jeſus aſked for her ſiſter. Upon which ſhe ſtep'd home, and ſaid in a whiſper to Mary, the maſter is hard by and calls for you. That dear believer no ſooner heard it, than ſhe at once quitted her company,*

company, and went with moſt ſollicitous haſte *to meet him. The* friendly *Jews who were with her*, obſerving how ſuddenly ſhe got up and ſlipped out of the room, *followed her, ſaying, To-be-ſure our dear friend is going to the grave, that ſhe may weep there*; which will but increaſe the power of her grief. We will try to turn her therefore from this deſign, for they really carry it too far." Theſe men thus drawn forth after her, were conducted to be ſpectators of the following glorious ſcene.

Now Jeſus was not yet entered the village; but having ſtopt where he converſed with the ſiſter, waited Mary's coming. Who when ſhe was in our Lord's preſence, did no more than *Martha* before, ſuffer herſelf to be intimidated by the rulers, who had agreed to excommunicate all who confeſſed him to be the Chriſt: but *ſhe* avowed her tranſcendent regard to him, and *dropping down at his feet, in lowly tears pronounced*, " *Lord, if thou hadſt come ſooner, our dear Lazarus had not died. But Jeſus when he ſaw that ſoft weeper, and the ſorrow gliſtening in rougher eyes, himſelf gave a groan, and ſtrong commotion poſſeſſed his ſpirit*; which on this occaſion judging proper to indulge, (though he had every paſſion always under command) *he* voluntarily *afflicted himſelf*, by opening his mind to a ſet of melting and painful ideas; *and again tenderly ſurveying the mournful company, he ſaid, Where have*

ye laid him? They *anſwered, Lord, we deſire thou wouldſt come and ſee*; wiſhing to bring him to the tomb, in ſome little hope of what was afterwards done.

And as they were going along, thoſe eyes that never had ſhot one glance of lewdneſs, nor one of malice, nor one of envy; that never had glittered with laughter, WHICH IS MADNESS; *the eyes of Jeſus himſelf melted into tears*; at thought of the unbounded miſery ſin had cauſed; on remembrance of the dead; in ſympathy with the living; and in pity to thoſe obſtinate Jews whoſe final impenitence he foreſaw, and knew how it would be aggravated in conſequence of beholding ſuch a miracle. *The Jews therefore*, ſeeing his tears, *ſaid, Look, how he loved him:* the couragious heart runs over with grief. *But ſome of them* who entertained an averſion to the ſelfdenying teacher, ſpoke out, "*Could not this perſon who gave ſight to the blind, have ordered it that the man in queſtion ſhould not have died:* Sure he might have come time enough to reſtore him, or as we have it reported in ſome inſtances, could have effected it even at a diſtance. *Jeſus* heard this malicious inſinuation, and *again groaning from anguiſh of heart, came to the ſepulcher. Now it was a cave, and a large ſtone was laid upon the mouth of it. The Lord ſays to them* that ſtood by, remove the ſtone. *But* here *Martha* relapſing into unbelief *objected*, "*Lord*,

" *Lord, he muſt now ſmell,* this being the fourth day ſince interment." *Jeſus replied upon her,* " *Why make you objections to what I direct? Did I not tell you, that if you would believe in me, you ſhould ſee the glory of God.*" *Then they took away the ſtone. Whereupon our Lord raiſing his eyes to heaven, ſaid, Father, I thank thee that thou haſt graciouſly heard the moan of my ſoul, which was offered up in thy preſence. And indeed I know thou always heareſt me,* and art moſt ready to accord my petitions. *But I now ſpeak thus becauſe of the multitude, that they may believe thou haſt ſent me. Then* with that voice which called the uproar of waves and winds immediately into a glaſſy calm, *he gave the command,* " *Lazarus, come forth. And* ſuch almighty energy went along with the words, that *the dead man came ſtrait forth bound hand and foot with grave-clothes,* or ſeveral foldings of linnen wrapt round him, but by the power of Chriſt ſo far looſened as to let him move; and *his face was alſo bound about with a napkin. And Jeſus* on *Lazarus*'s coming forwards in this confined poſture, *ſays to the by-ſtanders, looſe him, and let him go.*" Nothing more in a miraculous way was needful, all his ſtrength being recoverd with his life. *And* the ſtupendous publick miracle had ſuch an effect, that *many of the Jews who were come to viſit Mary, beholding what Jeſus did, believed on him as the Meſſiah. But others* were

ſo

ſo deſperately perverſe, they *went away and told the Phariſees of Jeſus's grand performance*; to ſet them upon checking his increaſing influence over the people: a doleful confirmation of our Lord's aſſertion; *if they hear not Moſes and the prophets, neither will they be perſuaded, though one roſe from the dead.*

Hours of bliſs indeed were thoſe, which ſucceeded the lamentations of theſe affectionate mourners. With what ineffable endearment *Lazarus* and his ſiſters converſed with each other: with what gratitude of adoration they proſtrated themſelves before their Almighty reſcuer! But the tongue of an angel cannot tell, or the mind of a mortal can never comprehend, the tranſports running through the whole redeemed world at the laſt day; when love and devotion ſhall be perfected, and thoſe whoſe union has been drawn tighteſt by bonds of nature and of grace, ſhall ſpring up together in a never-ſeparable, and that an immortal exiſtence.

CHAP.

CHAP. IV.

Chriſt's progreſs to Jeruſalem. His agony in the garden. Rehearſal of his ſufferings in the city.

NOW what intelligent nature with it's each alert faculty is not ſtraining upon the ſlip, to hail this renovator of life into his conſecrate *Jeruſalem? The light illuminating every man* comes to that populous ſeat of darkneſs, but too thick the gloom for admiſſion of it's far-ſhining glory: whence our Lord exclaims "Oh adamantine and impenetrable city! *Jeruſalem! Jeruſalem! thou that haſt killed the prophets, and ſtoned thoſe, who were ſent to thee for thy converſion and ſalvation! oh unhappy, though diſtinguiſhed race of men, ſo frequently imbrued in the blood of martyrs, 'tis grown a proverb that a prophet cannot periſh out of Jeruſalem. How often would I the ſender of holy perſons to you, have in tranquillity and proſperity gathered you together, as a hen collects her tender brood under her wings; and ye would not hearken to my compaſſionate calls*, but hardened your hearts againſt every effort of my love, and now have repaid ME IN PERSON with contempt, hatred, and all the fury of perſecution. *Behold your glittering temple and ſacred city where you placed your confidence, is left*

left unto you totally deſolate. To weep is all ye can (nor that long,) over all it's deciſively ruinated ſtability and ſplendour. *For henceforth ye ſhall not ſee me any more till ye ſay* with another aim * than at my entry, *Bleſſed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord*; till your calamities have taught you earneſtly to deſire the Meſſiah, and divine grace ſhall have inclined you as a nation, gladly to receive him under that character. —But you little think through what ſcenes of deſolation, exile, and miſery you muſt paſs, before that devoutly ſigh'd-for period arrives.

MATTERS now ripened to a cloſe of the moſt generous life ever tranſacted; and as this termination will be the moſt tragigal which eye had beheld, the divine Jeſus being exhibited for a butt to contempt and to cruelty, and this would ſhake the faith of his diſciples in him;—therefore beſides all the ſigns of deity already blazoned; the Lord thought proper to give forth ſuch proofs of his omniſcience, that his followers bye and bye, looking *through* the veil of the ſuffering Jeſus, might not be thrown from their hold of God their Saviour.

To

* From the ſudden turn the populace took upon our Saviours letting himſelf be overpowered by the government, it is plain the Jews welcomed him to their city, in expectation of riſing by him to temporal greatneſs; and when that hope was diſappointed, their rage knew no bounds.

To which end: *when this great rabbi with his numberleſs hearers*, in their progreſs to *Jeruſalem*, were advanced *as far as Beth-phage and Bethany*, which lay to the eaſt of that city, *he ſent out two of his diſciples with this order*, "*Go into the oppoſite village, and as ſoon as you enter, you'll ſee a ſhe-aſs with her fole both tied at a door: upon which filly no man has yet ſat. Looſe him without the leaſt ſcruple, and bring him hither to me. But if any one ſhall demand what you are about, and why you meddle with the colt* *, *ye ſhall anſwer*, "*Jeſus the Lord has occaſion for him*;" and the owner will make no difficulty to lend him and the dam too, upon the authority of my name, that I may uſe either, as I ſhall chuſe, to ride into the city. *Theſe diſciples preſumed not to debate the order*, though ſo very ſtrange; *but going their way, actually found the dam and fole tied abroad at the door of a houſe, in the entrance of the town where two roads met; and as Jeſus gave direction, immediately fell to looſing them.* *But* while they are thus buſied, providence, to prevent any ſcandal, ſo ordered it, *that the owners who were ſtanding there with other perſons, ſaid to them.* "*What do you untie the colt for, which you know to be none of yours.?*" *They made anſwer*, we are far from an intention to injure you; but *Jeſus* the meſſenger of the bleſſed God, the great proprietor of all, *hath*

* The *eaſtern* aſs is much larger, and a ſtatelier animal than that in our country.

hath need of him, and would borrow him for a little while, to ride into the city: and his character is too well known, that you ſhould fear being lòſers by accommodating him in this ſmall inſtance." *On this they* were thoroughly ſatisfied and *let their beaſts go. And they led to Jeſus the fole, whom the aſs did not quit. But here having no ſaddle, they threw their looſe mantles over them both, that the Lord might ſit more eaſy aud decent on either; and as he fixed on the raw filly, they placed him thereon. Now ſhout, O daughter of Sion; for it is thy king, who cometh unto thee;* thy king more inconceivably glorious, the more he abaſes himſelf upon undone man's account. *And of the people that ſurrounded him, numbers ſpread their garments in the way,* that he might ride as upon one continued carpet; while ſome with wild joy cut down branches of trees growing a-long-ſide, *and decorated the road with them.* Yet the colt in Jeſu's miraculous hands went quietly *along with the ſhouters; through the boughs; even over all in it's way.* Nevertheleſs, theſe jubilators, at leaſt for the major part, were only expecters of a temporality. Oh how ought *we* to throw wide the gates of our ſouls, to ſtrow the way with ſpirited dutiful ſervices, with all the moſt glowing love, with the intenſeſt devotion, who ſingly from this *king of glory,* derive the invaluable hope of an eternity in heaven.

Thus

Thus our adored *Jeſus paſſed along, and when he had reached the deſcent of the mount of Olives, a vaſt multitude of citizens and ſtrangers,* who *from Galilee and other parts* were come to keep paſſover at Jeruſalem, having by ſome who run before the company, learnt not only this ſolemn pompous proceſſion, but that ſtupendous ſuſcitation of *Lazarus* as from eye-witneſſes, —reſolved to go and uſher in Chriſt with all poſſible reſpect; accordingly they *took branches of palm-trees* commonly carried before thoſe who rode in triumph, *and went forth to meet him, crying Hoſannah!* God ſave and proſper him! *Bleſſed be the king of Iſrael, who comes by the authority of the Lord,* to redeem us, and to rule over us. May the praiſe catch from earth to heaven, and ſwelling in the ardent breaſts, flow from the melting tongues of rapt ſeraphs! *We hail the ſacred kingdom of our father David, which arrives in the name of the Lord,* not gained by the alarms of war, and garments rolled in blood, but rendering itſelf through it's influence upon the mind, as we now feel, victorious over every oppoſition. *Hoſannah* therefore *in the higheſt* orders of angels, and on earth! repeat again, and again, your ſongs and your congratulations."

Ah Lord, muſt we ſee thee on another ſtage,—not like this *ſo due* to thy divine beneficence? Yes, 'tis very fit we view the

the mournful *Gethſemane*. I miſerable writer labour with a thought too vaſt for any created capacity; my God is going to agonize, and expire. Oh if any one has a tear to drop, has a ſigh to fetch, for ſuffering innocence, for the only perfect innocence that ever ſuffered, for innocence ſuffering only for our ſakes,—let him, let her, give free courſe to it, in aid of my debility.

Jeſus and his diſciples, paſſed from the laſt ſupper, to a place called Gethſemane, as being a very pleaſant and fertile garden, ſituate in the fat boſom of thoſe many hills, the range of which conſtitutes THE MOUNT OF OLIVES. *And when he was arrived at the entrance of the ſpot*, whither his cuſtom led him to retire, *he ſays to his diſciples, ſit ye down here a while, and obſerve what paſſes abroad; for I ſhall go and pray in yonder receſs.* And as this was an extraordinary paſſage of his life, *he took with him Peter, James, and John* the ſpectators of his transfiguration, to be witneſſes of the aſtoniſhing ſcene of his agony. *And going on with them*, towards a more retired part of the garden [LET US LOOK AND OURSELVES AGONIZE] *he began to be in a very viſible amazement and horrour of mind* *, on account of ſome inconceivably painful

* Dr. *More* truly obſerves, that *Chriſt*'s continued reſolution in the midſt of theſe agonies and ſupernatural horrours, was the moſt heroic that can be imagined,

painful and terrible ſenſations, at that time impreſt upon his ſoul by the immediate hand of God. *Then* turning to the three diſciples, *he ſays to them* "My friends, you never ſaw me ſtruggling with ſuch torrents of woe as now; *my ſoul is invaded on all ſides with an extremity of anguiſh and ſorrow, that tortures me even unto death:* and I know the infirmity of human nature cannot long ſtand it, without ſome peculiar ſuſtentation from God; to

 him

gined, and far ſuperior to valour in ſingle combat, or in battle; where, in one caſe, the ſpirit is raiſed by natural indignation; and in the other, by the pomp of war, the ſound of martial muſick; the example of fellow-ſoldiers, the thirſt of glory. [See *More*'s Theological Works, p. 38.] Dr. *Whitly* would not allow, that theſe agonies aroſe from the immediate hand of God upon him; which he thinks not to be the caſe even of the damn'd in hell. But it ſeems impoſſible to prove that it is not. He rather is of opinion it might ariſe from a deep apprehenſion of the malignity of ſin, and of the miſery brought upon the world by it. But conſidering how much the mind of *Chriſt* was impreſt by what he now endured, ſo as to give ſome greater ſigns of diſtreſs, than in any other circumſtance of his ſufferings; there's reaſon to conclude, there was ſomething extraotdinary in the degree of the impreſſion: and it ſurely comes much to the ſame, whether we ſay, God by his own immediate agency inflicted ſome uncommon horrors upon his mind; or, that the ſtrength of his ſpirits, and perhaps the tone of his nerves, were ſo impaired, that the views he had of theſe things, affected him to a degree of exquiſite and uncommon ſenſibility. *Family Expoſitor.*

him therefore I ſhall apply with the greateſt earneſtneſs; and *do you* in the mean time *continue here, watching how it is with me. And beg of God* YOU *may not enter into the temptation to deſert me*, of which I have juſt been giving you notice. *Jeſus then withdrawing to a ſtill deeper receſs, firſt knelt down; but the fervour of his devotion augmenting, proſtrated himſelf upon the ground, praying, that if it were poſſible, the dreadful ſeaſon of woe then torturing him, might be ſhortned, and paſs away from him; and he ſaid;* "*Father! my Father! I know that all things proper to be done are poſſible to thee: Ah then, righteous God, if it be* ſo far *practicable*, as may conſiſt with what thy wiſdom has appointed for the advancement of thy glory, and the ſalvation of thy people, I moſt preſſingly beſeech thee, that thou immediately wouldſt *take away this cup* of abhorred bitterneſs, yea, let it now paſs *from me*; let peace and comfort revive in my oppreſt ſpirit.—*Neverthelefs*, if thou ſeeſt needful to continue it, or even to add more grievous ingredients to the potion, here am I ready to drink it off in ſubmiſſion to thy diſpoſal, and on the whole I feel a compleat alacrity to ſay, *Not as I will, but as Thou wilt*; for though nature really recoils with the ſtrongeſt averſation from theſe ſufferings, it is the determinate purpoſe of my ſoul to welcome whatever thine

thine all-ſeeing mind ſhall appoint for me," *Then he* got up off the ground and *came to his diſciples*; *whom he found aſleep upon duty*; *which made him thus expoſtulate with them*; " *Are your ſtrong profeſſions of zeal, ſo lately made to me, dwindled to ſuch a poor performance?* When you ſaw me in an agony of grief too mighty for nature, and knew the black ſtorm which continued burſting upon my head,—INDEED were you ſo unconcerned, *that you could not keep watch for me one hour?* And *Peter*, my boaſtful champion, who was reſolved to die with me ſooner than deny me; could not your attachment hold your eyes open, in ſo GREAT AN EXTREMITY SUCH A SMALL TIME? O all my heedleſs ſervants, I renew my warning to you; watch and pray, leſt you be helpleſsly invelopt in that fierce temptation, which menaces every one of you, but particularly thee, my dear Peter. I know the bottom of you all is ſound; *the ſpirit* indeed *is ready* to expreſs the dutiful regard you have for me; *but* yet, as your own preſent experience may convince you, *the fleſh is weak*; and ſince you could ſo give way to it's infirmity as to fall aſleep at this unſeaſonable time, you want to be admoniſhed, that if you don't maintain a better guard over yourſelves, and are not more importunate for aſſiſtance from God, it will ſoon gain a much greater victory

over you *. *And* after this gentle, yet tingling reproof of them, ——— *retiring a ſecond interval, the dear Jeſus ſpread his diſtreſsful ſoul before his God*, with the ſame ardour, and ſubmiſſion,—*ſaying, Oh Father* moſt beloved, *if* for undone man it be neceſſary I ſhould undergo theſe immenſe inflictions, and *this cup may not paſs away from me* without my taking off the moſt diſguſtful ſediments of it, I ſtill dutifully acquieſce: *O perform thy will*, be fleſh and blood ever ſo reluctant. *And returning to the diſciples, he found them aſleep again; ſo weighed down were their eyes* with wearineſs and ſorrow. *And* he afreſh applied his ſtinging words to them; with which *they* ſeemed utterly confounded and *knew not what to anſwer him*, yet ſo ſenſeleſs were they as to relapſe into the fault immediately after. *Our Lord now a third time left theſe ſorry helpers, and ſent up the ocean of his deſolation to his Father's throne, ſaying,* "*If thou pleaſeſt,*

* So gentle a rebuke, and ſo kind an apology, (archbiſhop *Tillotſon* very juſtly and beautifully obſerves) were the more remarkable, as our Lord's mind was now diſcompoſed with ſorrow, ſo that he muſt have the deeper and tenderer ſenſe of the inattention of his friends. [See *Tillotſon*'s, vol. 2. p. 345.] —— How apt are we to think affliction an excuſe for peeviſhneſs: but how unlike are we to *Chriſt* in that thought, and how unkind to ourſelves as well as our friends; to whom, in ſuch circumſtances, with our beſt temper, we muſt be more troubleſome than we could wiſh. *Family Expoſitor.*

pleaſeſt, oh my God, to excuſe me from the continuance of this boundleſs diſtreſs of ſpirit, 'tis what would greatly rejoice me, and with entire humility, I aſk it. *Yet, not my will, but thine be done.* And in this laſt addreſs his combat was ſo violent and ſevere, that except for the conjunct divine ſtrengthening the human nature, he could not have ſupported it. His declaration preſently after, that *this was the hour of his enemies, and of the power of darkneſs,* gives foundation for our concluding, that Satan who in the deſart, begun aſſaulting his holy ſoul, now aſſembled a mighty hoſt of his devils, and all united their force againſt him in the moſt terrible manner, to perſecute and diſtreſs his innocent mind labouring under the divine wrath, which he our moſt adorable proxy alſo in this hour ſuſtained. But he that *prayed and did not faint*; who left yon ſpangled vault, that we abaſing ourſelves might purſue his ſteps, *was* in the event *heard in that which he feared:* [See Heb. v. 7.] *For an angel from heaven apparent, ſtood infuſing ſtrength into him,* and ſuggeſting ſuch holy conſolations, as were moſt proper to ſpirit up his heart in ſuch an intenſe wreſtling. But with all theſe ſenſible tokens, that he was ſtill the charge of heaven, and ſhould quickly be made victorious over all, his dreadful terrors hardly abated; *and being in an* unſpeakable *agony, he prayed with yet*

higher fervour; *ſo that* though in the open air, and a freezing night, *his ſweat ran off with uncommon violence*; *yea*, ſo ſtrong was the commotion of animal nature, and all it's veſſels in ſuch ſort overturned and broken up, that *the blood forced a paſſage through the ſmall perſpiratory ducts, and* this condenſing as it ſtarted, *dropt from his brow in clots, as he bowed him down to earth.* Yes, 'twas in a ſharp night, O men, and upon the ground hard-frozen, that the Son of God ſweat blood abroad, becauſe ye do ſin. *Riſing up from prayer, he yet came back to ſee how it went with his diſciples, and this third time* [lamentable frailty!] *found them in a ſtupid doze. And he ſaid to them*; ah careleſs men, *why ſuffer you ſleep to captivate your faculties*, and exclude you from ſuch an important ſcene, which demands your moſt exerted attention.] Let the voice of a dear friend awaken a lively ſympathy in your hearts; an agonizing Saviour's voice, which calls upon you yet once more to *ariſe and pray, that you enter not into* a circumſtance of very dangerous *temptation.*" *But as* their drowſineſs was inſuperable even to all this, and *he knew thoſe that came to apprehend him were juſt entering the garden*, he altered his tone of voice, and *ſaid to them in an ironical manner, you may now ſleep on* if you can, *and take your reſt* as long as you pleaſe. I have been ſummoning your manly powers

to

to watchfulneſs for me and yourſelves; but *it is* now *enough*; for this ſeaſon of watching is over, and I have no more need to preſs you to it: you will now be rouzed by another kind of alarm, than I find my words can give you; for *behold, the* expected *hour is come, and the Son of man is* even now *betrayed into the hands of* moſt inhuman *ſinners: ariſe therefore, and let us go along with them*, wherever they ſhall lead us. *See, ſee, my betrayer preſents himſelf.*

The traytor Judas well knew this retired haunt of our Lord's; where commonly, when the kind day-labour was done,—thoſe, even NOW all the human race, whom he could not reach with his healings nor lectures, he ſtill overtook with his prevalent interceſſion, ESPECIALLY EMPLOYED for his future murtherers. Jeſus particularly had reſorted thither with his diſciples again and again, ſince his coming up to ſpend this paſſover at Jeruſalem *.

* It was probably a garden belonging to one of *Chriſt*'s friends, where he had the liberty of retiring when he pleaſed. And here accordingly he uſed to ſpend ſome conſiderable time in prayer and pious converſe, in the evenings, or nights, after his indefatigable labours in the city and temple by day. It is indeed amazing how fleſh and blood could go through ſuch inceſſant fatigues; but it is very probable, *Chriſt* might exert ſome miraculous power over his animal nature, to ſtrengthen it for ſuch difficult

Judas therefore having received a Roman cohort with Jewiſh officers, from the chief prieſts and other Phariſees, members of the ſanhedrim and prime movers in this affair, *comes thither with weapons, torches, and lamps,* which they brought though it was now full moon; to uſe their arms, if there ſhould be any reſiſtance; or diſcover him by their light, if he hid in the private walks, or other receſſes of the garden, as they fooliſhly imagined our miraculous and magnanimous Jeſus might do. *Now he that betrayed him went a little before the others, and* that there might be no miſtake, *had given them a ſignal for knowing Jeſus from any ſhould be with him, ſaying, he whom I ſhall kiſs* at my entering the garden, *that's your man*; and let me counſel you to make ſure work; *lay hold of him immediately and lead him away ſafely*; for he has effected prodigious eſcapes from ſome who thought they had him as faſt as you poſſibly can. But if he gets away after this caution, you'll remember 'tis your fault, not mine. *And* accordingly, *being come into the garden, he drew near to Jeſus,* with a face in which feigned love and reverence contended for maſtery,

difficult ſervices, and to preſerve it in health and vigour; otherwiſe the copious dews which fall by night in thoſe parts, muſt have been very dangerous, eſpecially when the body was heated by preaching in the day, and often by travelling ſeveral miles on foot. *Family Expoſitor.*

maſtery, *and* as though overcome with joy to meet him again, after but a ſhort abſence of hours, *he addreſſed him*, "*O my venerable, my belov'd maſter, hail to thee!* may the higheſt happineſs perpetually attend thee." *And upon this he kiſſed him. But Jeſus* well knowing the perfidious purpoſe veiled with ſo plauſible a behaviour, *anſwered, friend*, (for thou beareſt the name of a man and a friend,) *wherefore art thou come?* whence ariſes this ridiculous tranſport and undeſired formality? think of it, Judas. Is this the friendſhip thou haſt ſo often boaſted? *doſt thou betray the Son of man*, him who became the ſon of man for miſerable ruinous ſinners like thee;—ah betrayeſt thou this condeſcending perſonage *with a bold fictitious kiſs?* is thy common ſenſe ſo loſt to think of impoſing upon him by this poor artifice? or that a covenant-keeping God who has promiſed the Mediator ſo glorious a kingdom, will not puniſh ſuch baſe treachery and cruelty to him?

From the whole tenour of the hiſtory it reſults, that *known to this triumphant ſufferer were all things* in their remoteſt conſequences; yet each terrible circumſtance of his commencing paſſion. But juſt as the ſun pours it's blaze, though there's an intervention of duſky clouds, ſo Jeſus undergoes no alteration from the thick arrangement of woes before him: but yet thought expedient his enemies ſhould know how he

could eaſily have eſcaped their malice; *wherefore as they were all coming up upon the ſignal, he ſtept in among them and ſaid, whom do you ſeek?* and the majeſty of the ſpeaker was ſo impreſſive, *they* could not reply, *him we have found*; but timidly *anſwered, Jeſus the Nazarene. He ſays to them*, you have him then before you: *I am he.* Now *with theſe words*, Jeſus let a ray of his glory break out upon *the invaders*; at which thoſe diſcomfited worms drawing back, *fell down to the earth* whence they were taken *: yet *ſome moments after, recovering from their conſternation*, manfully *rallied againſt* the unarmed Chriſt, who *aſked them once more, whom ſeek ye? and they ſaid as before, Jeſus the Nazarene. Our Lord replied*, I have already told you, *I am he:*

* As there were ſcribes and prieſts among them, they muſt have read of thoſe companies, which came to ſeize the prophet *Elijah:* a fact that bore ſo great a reſemblance to this, it is an amazing inſtance of the moſt obdurate wickedneſs, that they ſhould venture to renew the aſſault on *Chriſt*, after ſo ſenſible an experience of his power and mercy. Nothing ſeems more probable, than that theſe wretches might endeavour to perſuade themſelves and their attendants, that this ſtrange repulſe was effected by ſome dæmon in confederacy with *Jeſus*, who oppoſed the execution of juſtice upon him; and they might perhaps aſcribe it to the ſpecial providence of God, rather than to the clemency of *Jeſus*, that they had received no farther damage. The moſt corrupt heart has it's reaſonings to ſupport it, in it's abſurdeſt notions, and wickedeſt actions. *Family Expoſitor.*

he: if therefore you ſeek only me, you may let my dear friends go their way; and indeed I ſhall inſiſt upon that as a condition of ſurrendering myſelf to you; which, you have a ſenſible mark, it is not in your power to compel me to. "What a generous maſter is this, who had been ſo poorly ſerved by theſe friends of his, as he is pleaſed to call them. Thus became accompliſhed that aſſertion in his prayer after the ſupper; "of thoſe whom my heavenly father has given me, I have loſt, and will loſe, none" *When he had uttered the laſt words, they* who came to apprehend him, at length *violated the body of Jeſus, and took him priſoner. Hereupon, as his diſciples ſaw the conſequence, they ſaid to him, Lord, ſhall we ſmite* theſe impious wretches *with the ſword?* we have no apprehenſions about the matter; for ſmall as is our number, thou canſt make us victorious over this armed force. *And* forward *Peter*, not waiting the reply of the divine Lamb, *drew his ſword, and wounded Malchus a ſervant of the high-prieſt*, one remarkably officious in ſeizing Chriſt; *he aimed* indeed full *at his head*, intending to cleave him down at a blow; *but the ſtroke glanced a little on one ſide, ſo that he only ſlaſhed off his right ear**. *But Jeſus* being

* Though this might ſeem a courageous action, 'twas really very imprudent; and had not *Chriſt* by ſome

being determined upon a ſurrender, *ſaid to Peter, return thy ſword into the ſcabbard, for I'll not have recourſe to theſe or any other methods of defence. And take this with you,* "*All that uſe the ſword, ſhall periſh by the ſword.*" Whereby he ſtrongly intimated, that the Jews who now had drawn the ſword againſt him, ſhould ere long fall by it in a very miſerable manner, as they did in the continuing *Roman* war ſoon after; and that the ſword of divine vengeance would in one form or another, quickly find out all his implacable enemies. "*Beſides*, (added he) Peter, *doſt thou think I want thy feeble arm, who can be guarded by twelve legions of angels for only aſking my Father* *? *But if I thus ſtood on my defence, how ſhall the ſcriptures be fulfilled, the very prophecies I came to accompliſh, which have ſo expreſsly told that thus it muſt be.* Or how ſhould I approve my obedience to the God of heaven whoſe com-

ſome ſecret influence over-awed their ſpirits, it is very probable (as the pious Sir *Matthew Hale* obſerves) that not only *Peter*, but the reſt of the apoſtles, would have been cut to pieces. (*Hale's Contemplations*, p. 254.) *Family Expoſitor.*

* The *Roman* armies were compoſed of legions, which did not always conſiſt of the ſame number of men, but are computed at this time to have contained above ſix thouſand; and twelve legions were more than they commonly intruſted with their greateſt generals. How dreadfully irreſiſtible would ſuch an army of angels have been, when one of theſe celeſtial ſpirits was able to deſtroy 185000 *Aſſyrians* at one ſtroke! [2 *Kings* xix. 35.] *Family Expoſitor.*

commiſſion I bear? The cloud of fleſh obſcures your intellectual view; you only look at ſecond cauſes, and have but a very imperfect ſight of things. But my intuition of the originating cauſe is clear; and I conſider my ſufferings with a regard to his divine appointment, and the infinite importance they are of. *Say you* then *I ſhould not drink the cup my Father has given me?* why, that would not be at all the part of an affectionate and a confiding Son. *Then* all gave a looſe to their animoſity againſt him; and *the band of ſoldiers with the captain* at their head, *and the Jewiſh officers ſeized Jeſus* as a malefactor, *and* mindful of Judas's counſel, *fell to binding.—Now* while they pinioned him, *our Lord (anſwering to the occurrence) ſaid, ſuffer* me at leaſt to have my hands at liberty *thus far*, and ſtay but for a moment while I add one more act of power and compaſſion to all thoſe I have already done: *and calling Malchus to him, he touched his ear, and immediately made it whole* *. *In that ſame hour Jeſus ſpoke to the great ones*, ſo forgetful of the dignity of their character, as to come at this time of night with the rabble on ſuch a ſhameleſs errand. "For what imaginable reaſon *have you ſallied forth*

* As this was an act of great compaſſion, ſo likewiſe it was an inſtance of ſingular wiſdom; for it would effectually prevent thoſe reflexions and cenſures on *Jeſus*, which the raſhneſs of *Peter*'s attack might otherwiſe have occaſioned. *Family Expoſitor.*

forth againſt me with ſwords and ſtaves, as though I was *a* deſperate *robber* who put your lives to danger in apprehending me? *Has not your temple ſounded with my daily diſcourſes? But* then; *as finding no fault in me, you did not ſtretch out your hands againſt me,* nor in any way forbid me to proceed. *However*; I know *the over-ruling cauſe of all this better than you yourſelves do; a divine awe reſtrained you unperceived, which is at preſent taken off; for this is* YOUR *hour, and the power of darkneſs is now permitted to exert all his violence*; in obedience to whom ye beſtir yourſelves, with whatever pious names you may conſecrate the diſmal deed: *but all this is tranſacted, that the ſcriptures of the prophets might be fulfilled.*" *Then the diſciples* who had vowed in no extremity to abandon him, when they ſaw his enemies prevailing over him, *forſook their Lord and fled,* each ſeeking ſhelter where he could find it, either with friends, or ſtrangers. *And a certain youth* who lodged near the garden, and was waked by the noiſe of this tumult, having his bowels ſtirred for Jeſus whom he loved, *flung round his body the linnen cloth he lay in, ran out of doors, and followed the Lord* a little way after the reſt of the diſciples were gone. *And the young men who made part of the guard, laid hold on him. But he leaving the ſheet in their hands, fled from them naked* in very wild conſternation.

THEY

THEY have all left thee, Lord; but thine unworthy wretch would follow thee weeping: I would follow to the high-prieſt's palace, there hear thy ſpotleſs integrity venomouſly blackned,—ſee the creator cuft by the creature dependent for *enabling breath*; behold thine eyes, wakeful in prayer, muffled; and then (with ſmart ſlaps on thy beſpaul'd face) hear thine office of prophet derided with a "prophecy unto us, thou Chriſt, who is he that ſmote thee. I next would follow to *Pilate*'s judgment-ſeat, there ſee my God afreſh arraigned *for me*, hear his torturing death clamorouſly demanded, would behold the ſcourge make long furrows upon his back, and a crown of thorns clapt roughly upon the temples of the head and gaſhing the periofteum *; where the ſame was hammered down by blows of a walking cane †. Attentively I would notice *heathen Pilate* filled with ſtrong emotion at thee unexclaiming, yet ſtreaming with thy blood from all parts; obſerve this melted bearer of God's ſword bringing thee forth, part pale part crimſoned,

* A tegument of the bones, lying, in thoſe parts, very near the external ſkin; and ſo exquiſitely ſenſible, that in an operation of ſurgery, they carefully divide it, being afraid of making inciſion, leſt the patient go into mortal convulſions.

† Which is an eaſtern *reed*.—But a ſtroke with one of our reed had not (as *Doddridge* remarks) been worth the mention in a detail of ſuch dreadful ſufferings.

ſoned, to the earthly-minded and cruel Jews; unto whom he ſays; *behold the man* you more like ſavage, than civilized men, purſue! View him with attention; and when you ſee what dreadful things the poor unhappy creature has ſuffered, let that content you; for ſurely conſidering his innocence, he has endured already much more than enough." But when by a tumult of importunity, and the affrighting ſuggeſtion of *Tiberius*'s jealouſy, ſentence of death at laſt is extorted,—then, oh my Lord and my God, I would attend thee faint with the night's vaſt fatigue—The loſs of blood, cuts and bruiſes;—yet preſt by thy ponderous croſs, to fatal *Golgotha*. I would;—and at the time of irons drove through thy tender muſcular feet, hear the compoſed and merciful words, *Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do*. Every particular ſhould be enlarged upon, while my heart in blood lamented my ſin, the cauſe of every particular.—But the limits of this book don't admit, and hardly my feeble hand ſuffices. So I muſt be contented to meditate on theſe moſt intereſting events, and ſhall enter in again when thou, Oh my God, as to what of thee can expire, expiredſt. Reader, I intended you, however, an ampler ſummary, though not a compleat draught of our Lord's ſufferings; but find it done to my hand with the juſteſt reflexions, by the reverend *Doolittle*; who is thought to have

have wrote the beſt of the numberleſs authors on the holy ſacrament; and this writer needs ſmall alteration, except a ſprucer garb.

A brief rehearſal of the ſufferings of *Chriſt* in the city of *Jeruſalem*, when brought bound from the garden, to be tried for his life in the *Jewiſh* courts; ſerving for a more penitential, thankful, and affectionate remembrance of *Chriſt*, eſpecially by a believing communicant at the Lord's Supper.

THOU art now, O my ſoul, approached to the ſacred and ſolemn ordinance, inſtituted by the Lord Redeemer that night he went into the garden, to be particularly a commemoration of his laſt and foreſt ſufferings; for in that *reſort of pleaſure* having endured very much, he was brought bound thence, by ungrateful and bloodyminded men, to the city of *Jeruſalem*, yet to ſuffer further. Now they inſult over thy bleſſed Lord as their priſoner, carry him from place to place, from court to court, from perſon to perſon, as a pleaſant ſhow and grateful ſight to his bitter enemies: for he was led firſt to *Annas*, from *Annas* to *Caiaphas*, from *Caiaphas* to *Pilate*, from *Pilate* to *Herod*, from *Herod* to *Pilate* back again, and from thence to the

the place of execution: for thou, O my ſoul, hadſt wandered from God, and run from creature to creature, and from ſin to ſin, and hadſt deſerved to be driven from place to place by the righteous God, and to ſuffer eternal excluſion from the preſence of his glory, being led at laſt to hell, the dreadful place of execution. But the holy Lord in hands of violence, was hurried up and down, night and day, that thou mightſt have a manſion with God above, and a reſt ever-laſting therein. Therefore ſince engaged in this ſacred duty, keep in view thy wandering ſuffering Saviour, that the ſight of thine eye may affect thy heart. Where doſt thou find thy Lord in the city? Alas, as a malefactor arraigned in their courts. The ſcribes and elders met together in the night, looking, longing, watching when he ſhould be brought. What a ſpectacle is preſented to thee, O my ſoul? The immaculate Son of God anſwers before the ſons of men full of pollution; the judge of all men is judged by the worſt of men. Follow him in dear meditation; for early in the morning thy Jeſus is led from the high prieſt to *Pilate*; there the prince of life is tried for his life by a mortal; he that has no ſin by man that is full of ſin, and all ſin. Thou ſee'ſt the Creator ſtand before the ſitting creature.——O never was any thing, my ſoul, never any thing

thing like this. An offender againſt the God of heaven ſits in judgment upon the God of heaven. Death-guilty man paſſes ſentence of death upon his RIGHTEOUS JUDGE.

But in what poſture ſee I thee, deareſt Jeſus? Thou appeareſt as a malefactor before the *Roman* governour, when never was guile in thy mouth, nor evil in thy heart, nor wicked work found in thy hands. There thou art in bonds, that came'ſt to knock off my fetters; art covered with ignominy, who in reality ſhineſt *Lord of glory*; yet there I ſee thee ſtand with an undaunted courage, a mind patient to ſuffer whatever they ſhall adjuge thee to, for my ſake, and the ſake of all. Alas, my Lord, what ails my heart to be ſo hard, that it does not relent and roll within me; how can my eyes ſee ſuch an amazing ſight, and my curſed breaſt remain unaffected; when though I was debtor and priſoner, thou ſtandeſt there in the character of my ſurety, and yet I keep my place, while it paſſes, little, if at all concerned, at all thy ſhame and ſorrow! Oh why do not rivers of water guſh from my heart, and run with ſwift and ſpeedy ſtreams down my cheeks, when I behold thee arraigned at that tribunal for my iniquities; which had I been called to an account for at thy bar, I could not have ſtood before thee. My

counte-

countenance falls at once, Lord, on thought of being brought to thy tribunal, becauſe though there I muſt appear, yet in judgment I could not have kept my footing.

But be not dejected, O my ſoul, ſince thy ſurety has already been ſummoned in court for thy ſins; and becauſe the ſon of man did ſtand at an earthly judgment-ſeat, thou ſhalt be able to ſtand before the ſon of man, when he ſhall ſit upon his glorious judgment-ſeat. Thou, O Jeſus, alſo waſt charged home in the court of *Herod*; —that my Lord being arraigned in ſeveral courts, his poor believer might meet with favour in any court: when tried in the court of conſcience, I may be acquitted there; and when in God's court at the laſt day, I may be abſolved there: in thee I truſt, my Lord and Saviour, and accepting thee, and conſenting to thy covenant, do believe; that as thou haſt received ſentence of death from an earthly judge, I ſhall hear my eternal abſolution pronounced by the judge in heaven; that the ſins for which thou haſt ſatisfied, will never be laid to my charge, and in that confidence my ſoul doth at preſent bleſs thee, and all within me magnifies my Saviour God.

I hear the bleſſed Redeemer virulently proſecuted in every court: when before the high prieſt, he was atrociouſly accuſed there: —— when brought to *Pilate*'s bar, black

black charges were laid againſt him:—and when under the judgment of *Herod*, they continued there the venomous proſecution; and thoſe who were his judges in the firſt court, ſtood up his accuſers in the two other courts: thus followed was *Jeſus* where-ever he went with accuſations ringing in his ears; becauſe where-ever thou hadſt gone, thine accuſers would have followed thee. When thou hadſt laid down on thy bed, or ſat at thy board, there thine accuſers had hung upon thy ſkirts; and if thou hadſt applied thee to labour, or reſorted to thy recreation, there would thy proſecutors have ſtarted up: in fine, if thou hadſt appeared at the divine bar, thither alſo would *thine accuſers*, the law of God, thy own conſcience, ſatan, and God himſelf, have brought their charges againſt thee. But what things lay they at the dear *Jeſus*'s door? Some ſay, he is a blaſphemer; others accuſe him of hereſy, ſedition, and treaſon. But alas *I*, not thou, Lord, was the guilty perſon: I had committed high treaſon againſt the eternal God, and thou art accuſed of petty treaſon towards a mortal man. With me for object, the accuſation is undeniable; againſt thee it is quite falſe and indefenſible. Thou waſt charged with things neither ſaid nor done; while I am chargeable with a crowd of evils both ſaid and done. My Lord, woe is me, that ever I was guilty;

guilty; *thrice woe*, that I ſhould have ſo offended. My bowels are troubled, and my heart feels a ſtab, that I incurred the treſpaſs, from which I could never have been diſcharged, unleſs thou, O lamb of God, hadſt been ſadly miſaccuſed. Witneſſes againſt me were too many and all of them true. My ſoul, thou canſt not ſay a ſyllable, when charged with ſins numberleſs and heinous; when God witneſſes againſt thee; when thy own conſcience is an evidence againſt thee; when thy fellow-ſinners are ſo many deponents againſt thee; when the creatures of God, which thou haſt *ſo often wronged* by intemperance and inordinate love, — when the holy angels, and the devil, though he be a liar, all teſtify with truth in thy diſfavour. Alas, O Lord, my mouth is ſtopt; ſpeechleſs ſtand I at thy bar. To deny the facts is vain; it is likewiſe vain to ſeek evaſion. To excuſe, or extenuate my guilt, is impoſſible, when there is ſo much, and even ſupernumerary teſtimony of all my ſins, and of their no light aggravations. O Lord, I do not, O Lord, I dare not but confeſs, thou can'ſt do no other than CONDEMN ME.

Yet I obſerve, deareſt Saviour, thou waſt mute under all the falſe witneſs brought againſt thee; nay, though urged to ſpeak, thou made'ſt no anſwer; but ſtood'ſt ſilent to the admiration of thy judge; and when examined by *Herod* about

bout many things, thou gaveſt him never a word; for I was confeſſedly guilty, and thou as my ſurety didſt hold thy peace. I could anſwer nothing at the bar of God, charged truly by many witneſſes; therefore thou anſweredſt nothing at the bar of man, when charged falſely by many witneſſes.

By this, moſt glorious God, and righteous judge, againſt whom I have offended, it is that I, though a ſinner, have ſomething to ſay, and ſomething to plead. Thy ſon has unſealed my lips: he ſtanding ſilent before men, puts words in my mouth to ſpeak to thee. His making no anſwer for himſelf is anſwer enough for me: he pleaded nothing in the preſence of man, that I might have a prevailing plea in thine: that deep ſilence becomes my loud and full apology; and I experimentally find *thou waſt in Chriſt reconciling the world unto thyſelf*. Then, O my ſoul, there muſt be no deſponding: for where is thy faith in thy Lord Redeemer? He for his own ſins was not condemned, ſince the judge himſelf repeated he found no fault in him, and pronounced him a *righteous perſon*. Was the Redeemer then condemned for believers ſins, and ſhall believers be condemned too? O no: it ſhall not be: Chriſt will never ſuffer this, and the mercy of God and his faithfulneſs will never ſuffer this; yea, and his juſtice never will require

require this. Why doſt thou not triumph therefore, O my ſoul, and with a holy joy of heart ſolace thyſelf in Chriſt thy Saviour: for when chief prieſt, ſcribes, and elders, voted upon earth and with one conſent ſaid, *he is guilty of death*,— Father, Son, and Spirit, voted and unanimouſly concluded, *Whoſoever believes on him*, ſhall be a partaker of ever-growing raviſhment in heaven.

But alas my all ſufficient Saviour! this ſhudders me more than all other ſins, that I have neglected ſo great ſalvation, — and beheld the world, my pleaſures, oh—my very ſins and vanities, with a preference to *thee*. I know from every tranſgreſſion beſides thou wouldſt have ſet me clear. But this cuts my heart in pieces; to have choſe the dirt of earth above the King of heaven; which I know is not conſiſtent with ſalvation. "But, ſoul, let not this hinder thy coming to me now, and thy former folly (believe me) ſhall not be thy condemnation; for I have alſo ſatisfied for this, ſo long as it is not a FINAL REFUSAL OF ME. Was it not a part of my ſufferings that a *Barabbas* was prefered to me? The *ſon of their father the devil* was more lovely in mens eyes than me the Son of God. Therefore, O doubting, drooping ſoul, if (though late) thou haſt altered thy mind, and choice, and thy *heart* would rather have me NOW than all things in the world,

this

this heavy ſin alſo is matter of mercy, and ſhall not be imputed to thee."

O my loving Lord, a ſweet ſound arrives at my ears, and potently pervades the bottom of my heart. It is overcoming grace. Lord Jeſus, the long deſpiſer of thy love by love is conquered. May it's triumphs be commenſurate with the world of rational agents. My will doth bow; I do love thee more than all Things: and thou that knoweſt my heart, doſt know I deſire thee above this univerſe, and that nothing in it is in my eſteem at all comparable to *thee*. Upon thy grace therefore I rely, and in thy word and promiſe will truſt, that from this ſin too I ſhall be ſaved, and for it never condemned: for thee I now do chuſe, and now I do thee take, as the deareſt beloved of my ſoul.

Go on, O my heart, to loath thy ſins more if poſſible, than in thy unregeneracy thou hadſt affection to them. Look how the naked back of thy adored Lord is ſcourged for thy ſins, 'till the blood faſter guſhes down, than now do thy tears for ſin, even for thy own ſin. O ſee the laſh clapping about his breaſt, 'till the ſkin is all jerkt off, the fleſh by pieces torne away, and there appear the bones beſtreamed with blood. Mangled likewiſe is the viſage of thy Lord, and beaten black and blue; ſo marr'd is he all over more than the miſerableſt ſons of men. The wounds ſin gave thee were

certain deadly,—but thoſe inflicted upon thy Jeſus were *curing wounds*, *healing ſtripes*; and *he was bruiſed for our iniquities*. Wretch, O wretch, to make myſelf merry with my ſins! Now I ſee how the Lord of my life, and of all life, was treated for them. I ſee them hateful, abominable, deviliſh of a truth.

CHRIST obtained victory by receiving blows, and never lifted his hand to ſtrike: come on then, *my hidden man*, be not diſheartened; death is by death ſubdued, laid harmleſs, yes, and beneficial at thy feet: ſo take to thyſelf the whole armour of God: dextrouſly manage thy ſpiritual weapons: Chriſt the captain of thy ſalvation won the field and ſat down upon his father's throne: thou in his ſtrength ſhalt conquer, and be an aſſeſſor with him upon *his* throne.

But alas my Lord! the ſeaſon of this ordinance is almoſt paſt; yet find I not that working of affections in my breaſt, which many of thy ſervants ſo profitably experience. Their ſorrow for ſin requiring ſuch atonement does contract a great depth. Their breathings after thee gain a ſweet enlargement. Their faith confirmed by this *ſacred bequeſt* rears itſelf to heaven, from whence thou art to come.—All their graces are drawn forth into the moſt influencing exerciſe. But, Lord, thy miniſter's work is near compleated, and

mine

mine is hardly commenced. The *exhortative*—the *laudatory*—the *commemcrative*—and *the conſecrating* Prayer has been offered up, and yet this heart of ſtone diſſolves not in my boſom. But ah! if I quit the place before I meet thee, O Lord, and feel leſs queſtionable operations of thy grace, either will my dwelling repoſſeſs me diſconſolate, or (what is worſe) unconcerned to have miſt the things, I ſhould have laboured to gain with all my might.

Awake then, O my ſoul, rouze up thyſelf, and yet endeavour to be edified by this attendance. And oh thou bleſſed ſpirit of God, thou penetrative comforter, come and with thy genial warmth diſimpriſon the ſpices of my heart. O may my graces yet ſend forth their pleaſant ſmell; and may I go home rejoicing in Chriſt's love, or, however, more troubled for and reſolved againſt my ſins.

And for this reaſon, O my ſoul; whether thou would'ſt plead for mercy to be extended to thee, or have dutiful affections ſtir'd up towards thy God, look on thy adorable Saviour bound, buffeted, rent with ſcourges, mock'd by ſinners, as thou mockeſt God by lifeleſs prayers. Oh God, my offences are numerous, are grievous, and I have nothing to ſay in extenuation of them: but do thou *behold the man.* My ſurety thy Son was beſpit, bruized, and flay'd with the ſcourge:——O Lord, *be-*

hold the man, and let my ſins be covered, be caſt into the depth of the ſea. I acknowledge to have merited the gaſhing ſtripes of thine infinite juſtice; but Jeſus was ſcourged, was condemned for my tranſgreſſions, and by wicked hands treated, as never was man treated: *O behold this Jeſus:* turn off thine all-ſeeing eyes from me a ſinful man, and regard thy Son ſuffering: O Lord, *behold the man.*

Come thou alſo, O my ſoul; if thou inclineſt to a heavy inſenſibility, *behold the man* higher than the heavens, *for thee*——arraigned, ſentenced to death, pricked with an afflictive wreathe, — and let this move thee to love him, and place thy ſingular delight in him. If ſin be not yet hateful and odious to thee, *behold the God-man* upon a croſs *blood all over* for ſin. Bleſſed Jeſus, when I ſee thee in this ſtate *for me*, my gratitude is in a fierce flame, my heart diſſolves with tender emotions, my deſires ſtrain hard after thee, and I go from hence admiring THY LOVE.

CHAP.

CHAP. V.

Chriſt's *death. Conviction of* Thomas,— *With other paſſages after the reſurrection. Our Lord's aſcenſion. This part of the work cloſes with addreſſes to our fellow-creatures.*

THE ſun of righteouſneſs ſhone incomparable through miſts of woe; and had let fall his regal raies upon the penitent thief, when near the croſs he *ſaw his mother with other women*, ſublime of ſoul, though humble and poor in ſpirit; *and* alſo *his diſciple John whom he peculiarly loved, ſtanding by*; *and* at the ſight, his affection to both ſo wrought in his heart, amidſt all the agonies and ignominies thirſtily aſſaulting him, that with a majeſtic motion of his tortured head, he *ſpake to the former*, "*Woman, behold thy ſon*; let the friend my ſoul dearly ſolaced in, fill up my place in thy loving breaſt." *Then ſaid he to the diſciple, behold thy mother:* treat that dear ſaint with the tender reverence a child owes to his worthy parent; for I now ſolemnly, with my dying breath, bequeath her to thy care. *And from that hour the diſciple took her to his own home*; where he reſpected and maintained her with great delight as his mother.

Now torne with ſcourges, gored with thorns, pierced with ſpikes, racked with horror of heart, (all of it due to human guilt) had the God of earth and heaven hung three whole hours upon the croſs: at which time nature is ſummoned to ſympathize with her ſuffering creator; for *a ſudden darkneſs intombed the* enormouſly wicked *land of Judea*; which while quenching it's ſupernatural, was puniſhed with the loſs of it's natural ſun. This continued from twelve o'clock 'till three in the afternoon; or, according to the Jews who begun their day at ſix, *'till the ninth hour:* during which ſpace, it was dark like a total eclipſe, in the natural way not poſſible, it being full moon *. And this pall of obſcurity flung over nature, ſtrikingly imaged the darkneſs and diſtreſs of ſpirit,

* Mr. *Shuckford* in his preface to the third volume of his excellent *Connexion of the ſacred and prophane hiſtory of the world*, has ſhown, I think, in a very convincing manner, that it is at leaſt mighty uncertain, whether the *Jewiſh* months according to the *Moſaic* inſtitution, begun with a new moon; and, conſequently, whether their paſſover, which was fixed to the fourteenth day of the firſt month, muſt always happen at full moon. But he allows, that towards the decline of their ſtate it did. And indeed *Joſephus*, who being a *Jewiſh* prieſt, is an unexceptionable witneſs in this caſe, ſeems to put it beyond all poſſibility of doubt; expreſsly aſſerting, that the day of expiation, and of courſe their other feaſts, *were reckoned by the age of the moon.* [Joſeph. Antiq. Lib. 3. Sect. 3. Δεκατῃ τε μηνος κατα σεληνην. *Family Expoſitor.*

ſpirit, with which the Lord of nature was then overwhelmed, and grappled with in the ſolemn ſilence, and unutterable bitterneſs of his ſoul. *But about the ninth hour, the lamb divine ſent* forth a piercing cry, "*My God, my God, why haſt thou forſaken me?* Wherefore, oh my heavenly Father, addeſt THOU to all my other ſufferings the want of a comfortable ſenſe of thy preſence? Why do'ſt THOU thus leave me alone in the combat, deſtitute of thoſe ſacred conſolations, thou could'ſt with perfect facility ſhed upon my ſoul, and which thou knoweſt I have done nothing to forfeit." [No: Lord! we forfeited them. Thou payedſt the forfeit. Therefore we enjoy them.] *Now ſome that ſtood by, hearing the ſound of Eloi*, that is, my God; *ſaid* with great deriſion, *Behold this man*, who always talked as if he had earth and heaven at command, reſolves to keep up the air of the Meſſiah to the laſt, and therefore *calls for Elijah* HIS fore-runner, as if he had authority to bring that holy prophet down from paradiſe to his aid *(a)*.

(a) Whether this was as Dr. *Edwards (Exercit.* pag. 196—203) and Mr. *Craddock (Harm.* Part 2. pag. 256) ſuppoſe, the miſtake of ſome *Helleniſt* Jews, who did not underſtand the Syro-Chaldaic language, or whether it proceeded from *Chriſt*'s being raiſed ſo high, that, with the rude noiſe about him, the people did not diſtinctly hear, I do not pretend to ſay. Perhaps it might be the malice of thoſe who did hear it, wilfully

Jeſus after this exclamation, knowing all his torments in the way to death were now accompliſhed, and being parched with violent drought, the conſequence of what he had ſo long ſuffered in mind and body, *fulfilled the ſcripture in ſaying, I thirſt. Now there was a veſſel of vinegar near the croſs* (*b*); *and immediately one of the people ran, took a ſponge, filled it with vinegar, and putting it round a ſtalk of hyſſop* (*c*), *which they had faſten'd on the top of a cane, advanced it* with ſcorn enough *to his mouth. But other by-ſtanders ſaid, let him alone, and let us ſee whether Elijah*, whom he has ſummoned, *will ſave him from the croſs:* and indeed it muſt be quickly, if he do it all." So trivially their

fully miſrepreſenting his words, to prevent any ſerious reflexions on the twenty-ſecond pſalm they are taken from. And truly *Jeſus* by theſe words gave the ſpectators a uſeful hint, that the whole of that pſalm referred to *him*; and it might have led them to obſerve how many paſſages of it had then in him a literal fulfilment. *Family Expoſitor.* Let me obſerve, our bible-verſion of the pſalms is the juſteſt by far; and indeed a very juſt one.

(*b*) It is well known, vinegar and water (which mixture was called *Poſca*) was the common drink of the *Roman* ſoldiers: perhaps therefore the vinegar was ſet here for their uſe, or for that of the crucified perſons; whoſe torture would naturally make them thirſty. *Family Expoſitor.*

(*c*) Hyſſop is a ſhrub that ſhoots abundance of ſuckers from one root only. At particular diſtances on both ſides it's ſtock, it puſhes out longiſh leaves, which are hard, odoriferous, warm, and a little bitter to the taſte.

their adamantin hearts were impreſſed by three-hours preternatural gloom now incumbent; and with this barbarous ridicule they inſulted in his expiring moments, him who endured the ſhame and pain of our Deſerts; which had been moſt inhuman, if, really, to the vileſt malefactor. *When Jeſus therefore had received the vinegar, he ſaid, it is finiſhed.* The great work is this moment compleated, the demands of the law are ſatisfied, the juſtice of God is atoned, and my ſufferings are now at an end. *And crying out once more with a great and ſtrong voice*, which ſhowed the vigour of nature undebilitate, *he ſaid* with the moſt animated faith and a ſacred exultation, *Father*, [for ſo I ſtill invocate thee, let mine enemies deride the claim as they pleaſe] I am now indeed coming to thee; and *with thee I intruſt my departing ſpirit*, as a charge I am confident thou wilt undertake and maintain. *And*, when he had utterd theſe words, *bowing his head, he* voluntarily *diſmiſſed his ſpirit*, and expired *(d)*. *And behold,*

(d) The evangeliſts uſe different words in expreſſing our Lord's death, which I a little wonder our tranſlators render in the ſame manner, "*He yielded*," or "*gave up the ghoſt.*" *Mark* and *Luke* ſay, εξεπνευσε, *He expired.* John, παρεδωκε το πνευμα, *He yielded up his ſpirit:* But *Matthew*'s language is yet more ſingular, αφηκε το πνευμα, *He diſmiſſed his ſpirit:* (as the ſame verb αφιημι is uſed, *Mat.* xiii. 36. *Mark* iv. 36. xi. 6. And elſewhere.) Now this expreſſion ſeems admirably

hold, God who from eternity had viewed the Redeemer with boundleſs complacence, by a moſt awful miracle avowed his own fatherſhip, appearing to take charge of the dear and excellent ſpirit, his Son had ſo ſolemnly and fiducially committed to his Care: *for* directly on his death, *while the ſun was ſtill darkened*, *the* thick-woven rich-embroidered *veil of the temple*, which ſeparated between the holy and the moſt holy place, *was at once rent in the midſt*, without any viſible means, *from the top to the very bottom*; ſo that while the prieſt miniſtered at the golden altar, it being now the time of evening ſacrifice, the ſacred oracle was expoſed to full view; God

admirably ſuited to our Lord's own words, *No man takes my life from me, but I lay it down of myſelf*: Shewing, as the ſtrong cry, which ſo impreſs'd the Centurion, did, that he dy'd by the voluntary act of his own mind, according to the power *received from the Father*, and in a way peculiar to *him*; by which he alone of all men that ever exiſted, could have continued life even in the greateſt tortures, as long as he pleaſed; or have retired from the body, whenever he thought fit. Which view of the caſe, by the way, ſuggeſts an illuſtration of the love of Chriſt in his death, beyond what is commonly obſerved; inaſmuch as he did not quit his body, as ſoon as ever it was faſtened to the croſs, leaving only a ſenſeleſs corpſe to the cruelty of his murtherers; but continued his abode in it, as long as was proper, with a ſteddy reſolution; and then retired from it with a majeſty never known, or to be known, in any other death; dying, if I may ſo expreſs it, like *the prince of life*. *Family Expoſitor.*

God hereby giving to underſtand, both the ſpeedy removal of the veil of the *Jewiſh* ceremonies, and eſpecially the opening a paſſage into his own holy preſence, by the precious blood of Chriſt poured out this moment on mount *Calvary* (*a*). *Likewiſe* in her innermoſt privacies nature felt the frightfulleſt commotions. *The low ſeated rocks ſundered in their very hearts in two* (*b*): *the earth trembled*, rolled, and gaped, *burſting open the* ever-dark *chambers of the dead. And* while theſe monuments continued uncloſed (*c*), *many bodies of ſaints* in

(*a*) This being ſo high a day, it is probable *Caiaphas* himſelf might now be performing the ſolemn act of burning incenſe juſt before the veil; which if he did, it is inexpreſſibly aſtoniſhing, that his obdurate heart ſhould not be impreſt with ſo awful and ſignificant a phænomenon. There is no room to doubt, but many of the other prieſts, who had a hand in *Chriſt* death, ſaw the pieces of the veil; which, conſidering it's texture, and the other circumſtances, muſt as fully convince them of the reality of this extraordinary fact, as if they had actually ſeen it rent. *Family Expoſitor.*

(*b*) Mr. *Flemming* acquaints us (in his *Chriſtology*. Vol. 2. p. 97-98) that a deiſt lately travelling thro' *Paleſtine* was converted by viewing one of the rocks, which ſtill remains *torne aſunder*, not in the weakeſt place, but croſs the veins: a plain proof it was done in a ſupernatural manner. *Family Expoſitor.*

(*c*) Conſequently the tombs ſtood open all the ſabbath; and indeed the law would not allow any attempt to cloſe them. What an aſtoniſhing ſpectacle! eſpecially, if the reſurrection of the bodies was not inſtantaneouſly accompliſhed, but by ſuch ſlow degrees as

in their profound ſleep, were raiſed up from the duſt of death: which ſaints, *after the reſurrection, entered the holy city, and appeared to ſeveral*, atteſting the truth of that momentous fact, and alledging their own reſcue from the grave in proof of the power in Jeſus's hands; of which they were the firſt fruits:—And that God by it would bring to paſs an univerſal reſurrection. *And when the Roman officer who guarded the execution*, ſtanding oppoſite the croſs, *heard ſuch vigour of voice in Jeſus*, ſuch great majeſty of ſentiment, *and invincible confidence in God at the moment of expiring, he frankly glorified God* by a teſtimony to the ſtupendous martyr's righteouſneſs, *declaring himſelf fully ſatisfied he was* really the perſon that he aſſumed to be, even *the Son of God* himſelf. *The ſoldiers alſo that attended the Centurion, upon ſeeing the earthquake and the*

as that in *Ezekiel*'s viſion. Yet I don't take upon me to ſay it was ſo; for it is unprofitable, too particularly to conjecture on circumſtances, which are not recorded. For this reaſon alſo I pretend not to ſay what became of theſe perſons; though, as one can hardly imagine, they either immediately returned to their graves, or that they continued to live on earth (*becauſe* it is only ſaid they *appeared* to ſeveral) it ſeems moſt natural to ſuppoſe, they aſcended into heaven after our Lord: perhaps from ſome ſolitude, to which they might be directed to retire during the intermediate days, and to wait in devout exerciſes for their change; for ſurely had they aſcended in the view of others, the memory of ſuch a fact could not have been loſt. *Family Expoſitor.*

the other wonders, feared greatly, and profeſſed, "*For certain this Jeſus of Nazareth,* whom we have been all this while abuſing with ſuch needleſs cruelties, *was a perſon truly divine,* and his heavenly Father will avenge his quarrel upon us, and upon the whole nation of the Jews who delivered him to us. *And all the multitude* (*d*) *whom this ſpectacle had aſſembled, went home beating their breaſts,* for grief, remorſe, and apprehenſion of the divine vengeance.

And ſhall *we not,* from ſorrow for ſin and it's effects —— in conſideration of the honour of God——of that of the dear Redeemer—of that of the dear Spirit of holineſs — Nay, for our rational nature's honour, tranſcribe into our lives this direction, which I have found ſo uſeful, even inceſſantly uſeful to my own ſoul, that my Conſcience don't permit me to keep it back from others? ——

The

(*d*) That is, *great numbers:* for it is no way neceſſary to ſuppoſe every individual perſon was thus affected. The conviction produced by theſe prodigies, undoubtedly made way for that converſion of ſuch a multitude by the preaching of the apoſtles (on the deſcent of the ſpirit) ſome weeks after, when theſe things were freſh in their memories. *Fa. Ex.*

The cure of laughing and of exultation.

Am I without discontinuance doing what shed God's blood;—acknowledge this to be true; and shall I still laugh? shed the blood of God, and laugh? *far be it*, Yea, God forbid I should not go softly all my days. May the divine grace restrain me from *raising a laugh!*—So (upon the same argument) shall I exult? No; never, positively never. O might but Jesus be magnified through each moment of my life and of my latest gasp;—so shalt thou also, O my Father that art in heaven, verily be magnified in thine only Son. *The End.*

When a contemptible worm, whose thoughts are almost absolutely powerless, —can only actuate it's own frame, or but by permission, that of another.—When such a feeble creature, which born yesterday, dies to-morrow, and depends on omnipotent mercy entirely for a resurrection, —when yet upon bright thoughts, upon superiority of wisdom — of learning — of riches—of health—and of what not— such a weakling is tempted to plume himself and hold his head high,—how all that is quashed by this single reflexion; *I murder thee, Jesus, Lord of life and glory*; for in no point of present life and conversation; not when we

we give alms with ſimplicity; nor when we pray for our enemies with cordiality; not when with juſteſt affections we celebrate the holy ſacrament—are we unaccompanied with that leaven of ſin, (nay, not when we moſt truly weep all this ſinfulneſs) which, if it had not moved *Chriſt* to die, after working out a better righteouſneſs for us than our own, muſt to everlaſting have prevented our reunion with an every-way perfect God. Thus here needs no long deduction of reaſon (for which there is not always time,) but, when levity of heart ariſes, we want nothing but a conſciouſneſs we are in a body of ſin, to ſtrike us into the duſt with the humbleſt ſorrow, and ſave us as well as fallen creatures can be ſaved, from the vice of pride ſo abominable to God in leprous ſinners, but who are by this Means profitably proſtrated before our *moſt merciful Lord.* I am confident this very fitting expedient ſo gains your approbation, and you are in ſuch a clear manner ſenſible of it's uſefulneſs, that I decline any further recommendation of it, and ſhall proceed to a few paſſages of my God's reſumed life, after ſaying thus much; I am far from rich, and by grace have ſome diſcernmnt in employing money—but I declare to you upon my ſoul, millions of worlds ſhould not purchaſe my reſignation of this ſingle maxim.

Our

Our Lord's reſurrection has been handled ſo thoroughly, and evinced unanſwerably in many excellent writings, among which I can't but diſtinguiſh *Weſt*'s ſo judicious *obſervations*; that I ſhall diſmiſs the conſideration of it with one word; the *chief prieſts* not making a ſearch after the body, proves there was none to be found. In the whole affair; there was ſo far from a plot and Colluſion between Chriſt and his apoſtles, that he had much a-do to convince their rigid unbelief and ſlow perception, even of the real fact. He appeared to ten of them, who were lockt in for fear of the Jews, and by ſhowing the marks in his body, and eating before them, with difficulty removed their great ſcrupuloſity. *But Thomas, called Didimus, was not in company when Jeſus gave them this ſatisfaction. The other diſciples therefore,* when they met with him, *told him, we have now ſeen the Lord with our own eyes,* and can no more doubt his being alive from the dead, than that you ſtand here before us. *But he ſaid to them,* this is a matter of ſo great importance, that I ſhall not admit the truth of it on any report, not even on yours, nor will I barely believe my own eyes; for *if I do not only ſee in his hands the marks of the nails, but alſo put my finger into thoſe very marks; and do not inſert my hand in the hole of his ſide, made by the ſpear,—I will not* by any means, or on any teſti-

teſtimony whatſoever, *aſſent to the truth of his reſurrection.* And as there was a great deal of faulty obſtinacy in this reſolution, our Lord left him a whole week under his perplexity. But; *the diſciples being again within doors and Thomas with them, Jeſus came as before,* ſuddenly throwing open the doors, and in a moment ſhutting them again; *and took his ſtand in the midſt of the apoſtles, and,* as in his former ſalutation, *graciouſly ſaid, peace be unto you. And then,* to let them know he was acquainted with what had paſſed in his abſence, as well as to convince the over-ſcrupulous diſciple, *ſays to Thomas, reach forth thy finger hither and examine my hands, and inſert, if thou wilt, thine hand into my ſide, and now caſt away thy incredulity, believing upon this evidence at leaſt,* which addreſſes itſelf at once to ſo many of thy ſenſes *. *And Thomas* † whom ſuch

* It is obſervable, that *Spinoſa* himſelf could find out no more plauſible objection againſt this evidence of the reſurrection, than to ſay, the diſciples were deceived in what they imagined they ſaw, heard, and felt; *(Vie de Spin.* p. 32.) which if admitted, would be in effect to allow, that men could not be competent judges of any fact whatſoever relating to their own ſenſations, and conſequenly would overthrow all human teſtimony in courts of judicature, and elſewhere. *Family Expoſitor.*

† It is not ſaid he actually touch'd the wounds; and our Lord afterwards aſſerts his belief was built on ſight, which ſeems to intimate, that this condeſcenſion of our Lord, with the evidence from the knowledge

ſuch abundance of demonſtration—ſo amaz-ing a condeſcenſion—and a ſtrong ſenſe of adoring the apparent Deity—poured in upon at once like a ſea, and utterly overwhelmed, *ſaid to him*; ah my merciful God, who haſt melted this heart of rock, and now ſtampeſt thy divine love thereon! *my Lord and my God* *! O now give me confirming grace; for though indeed I chearfully bow me under any affliction, yet ſuffer not that I ſhould wander any more from the gracious Deity; the thought of forſaking my divine all, kills me while I do thus thrillingly enjoy thee." Now profundity of reflexion abſolutely overpowered his utterance.—*Jeſus ſays to him, Thomas, thou haſt believed becauſe thou haſt ſeen* me, and received theſe ſenſible demonſtrations of my reſurrection: but I muſt pronounce; yet more *happy are they, who have not ſeen* me themſelves, and notwithſtanding have believed on the credible teſtimony of others; for they have ſhown

ledge he had of this unreaſonable demand made *in his abſence*, quite overcame *Thomas:* a turn of mind exceeding natural to ſo frank a temper, as that of this apoſtle ſeems to have been. *Family Expoſitor.*

* The irrefragable argument ariſing from theſe words in proof of the deity of our bleſſed Lord, (which ſo many good writers have ſtated at large) cannot be evaded by ſaying, theſe words are only an exclamation of ſurprize, as if he had ſaid, *Good God, is it indeed thus?* For it is expreſsly declared, he ſpoke theſe words *to him:* and no doubt Chriſt would have ſoverely reproved him, if there had not been juſt reaſon for addreſſing him thus. *Family Expoſitor.*

ſhown a greater degree of candour and humility, which renders the faith it produces ſo much the more acceptable *." The following *extract* is from *Doddridge*, and *not at all altered.*

Improvement to the Soul.

We moſt evidently ſee in this inſtance of *Thomas*, as well as in many circumſtances of the ſtory mentioned above, how far the apoſtles were from being raſhly credulous in the important fact of *Chriſt*'s reſurrection. It is apparent they erred in the contrary extreme; yet our gracious Lord

* *Happy are they who have not ſeen and yet have believed.*] If it be queried, why a greater bleſſedneſs is pronounced on thoſe, who believe on more ſlender evidence, it may be anſwered; our Lord by no means intended to aſſert, that every one who believes without ſeeing is happier than any one whatever believing on ſight; for then the meaneſt chriſtian now would be more happy than the greateſt of the apoſtles.—But he meant, that *where the effects of that faith were equal*, it argued greater ſimplicity, candor and wiſdom, to yield to reaſonable evidence without ſeeing, than could be inferred from having merely believed on ſight, after ſufficient evidence of another kind had been propoſed. It was therefore in effect telling *Thomas*, it would have been more acceptable to him, if he had not ſtood out ſo long: and it was doing it in ſuch a manner, as would be moſt for the encouragement and comfort of believers in future ages, to whom in many of his ſpeeches to the apoſtles themſelves, our Lord expreſſes a moſt obliging and affectionate regard. *Family Expoſitor.*

Lord condeſcended to ſatisfy ſcruples, which were carried to an extravagance. He renewed his viſit, and at the ſame time renewed his ſalutation too. *Peace be to you*, was ſtill his language; nor did he only ſpeak, but act as one who wiſhed, and was determined to give it. What peace muſt it adminiſter to the mind of this good man, when his Lord ſaid, *reach hither thy finger, and behold my hands; and reach hither thy hand, and put it into my ſide, and be not faithleſs, but believing.* Evidently did he hereby ſhow, not only that he was riſen from the dead, but circumſtantially knew thoſe events which had paſſed in his bodily abſence, and needed not human information. Let us then ever behave as in the preſence of *Chriſt*. Let us act, and ſpeak, and think too, in ſuch a manner as may bear his inſpection; and ſtruck with theſe united demonſtrations of wiſdom, power, and grace, let us proſtrate our ſouls before him, and ſay "Our Lord and our God;" *honouring the Son as we honour the Father*, and adoring the indwelling Deity thro' this veil of fleſh, in which it has been pleaſed to enſhrine itſelf, and kindly attemper, though not entirely to conceal its raies. Though we have not thoſe ſenſible manifeſtations granted to *Thomas*, let it ſuffice us, that the apoſtles were the appointed witneſſes of all theſe things; and *what they ſaw with*

with their eyes and their hands handled of the word of life; that have they declared unto us. Let us thankfully receive ſo convincing a teſtimony. Let us ſhow an upright and candid mind in accepting ſuch evidence, as the wiſdom of God has ſeen fit to give us; remembering a truly rational faith is the more acceptable to God, in proportion to the difficulties it ſurmounts; and that there are peculiar bleſſings in ſtore for them who have not ſeen, and yet have believed.

End of the Extract.

Upon a morning after; the power of Jeſus aſſemble'd the fiſh into *Peter*'s net, and created a clear-burning fire, and repaſt of other fiſh on the ſhore. Nature being refreſhed, our Lord addreſſes that apoſtle in this ſort; "*Simon, ſon of Jonas*, do you ſtand now to your bold profeſſion; *loveſt thou me indeed better than theſe thy brethren do*, and though they all ſhould forſake me, wouldeſt thou remain by my ſide? *Peter anſwered*, "With ſorrow that I love him no better, *let me ſay to my Lord, he knows I moſt ſincerely love him*; yet dare I not think it is with more affection than his other diſciples. *Jeſus replies to him; if thou doſt love* ME, come, let me have the proof; with a ſympathizing heart, O Peter, *feed my lambs*; tend thou carefully even

even the weakeſt and feebleſt of my flock. And in order to impreſs this yet more upon his mind, *he ſays to him again the ſecond time*; *Simon, ſon of Jonas, doſt thou indeed love me? Peter's anſwer was much the ſame*; "*Yes, Lord, thou knoweſt that I love thee.*" "*Why, feed my ſheep then, ſays Jeſus*; *this is what I want of you.*—For THEM my blood ſtreamed forth upon the croſs; and you can't do me ſuch a pleaſure, nor ſo well demonſtrate the love you profeſs, as by promoting their eternal intereſts with the cloſeſt attention." And that the injunction might never be forgot by him nor by any, *the dear Lord addreſſes his apoſtle the third time*; *Simon, ſon of Jonas,* WILT ABIDE BY WHAT THOU HAST SAID; *and doſt thou truly love me?*" *Peter was tenderly grieved to have his duteous affection thrice queſtioned, and, being pinched at heart, replies*; *thou all-penetrator of the human breaſt*; *knowing every thing, thou knoweſt I do love thee, as I ſay*; though my late lamentable fall might juſtly bring it into doubt; and that repeated denial of thee renders me worthy ſuch a rebuke, as this repeated inquiry implies. *Jeſus ſays in the end*; *if it is indeed ſo, feed my ſheep.*" [What art doing, Lord? love will break thy heart again.] "Peter, I acknowledge you love me, and know how to diſtinguiſh between frailty and treachery; therefore do I not only own thee for a diſciple, but confirm thee

thee eminently in thy apoſtolic office, by a trebled requiſition to feed my ſheep; and I charge you, ſtrain your zeal for the excitation, the edification, and the conſolation of my church. Nor will occaſions be wanting to ſhew your love, not only by labours, but by ſufferings too, and ſome of the moſt acute ſort: for *verily, verily, verily I ſay to thee*, and would have you remember it, as its accompliſhment is infallible:—WHEREAS *when thou waſt a young man, thou didſt gird thyſelf, and walk about without controul whither thou wouldſt, —When thou art grown old, another ſhall gird thee ſtretching out thy helpleſs hands, and take thee whither thou wouldſt not naturally incline to go*; for anguiſh like that is irreſiſtibly ſhocking to poor fleſh and blood: yet know I that notwithſtanding your late miſcarriage, your love for me will bear you through all *." *The Lord intimated in this, by what manner of death he ſhould glorify God: and further to explain it, ſays, follow me as I now walk along*,—and then keep up

* This apoſtle's crucifixion is ſaid to have happened about forty years after this; but the time is not exactly and certainly known. It was during the profligate *Helius*'s adminiſtration for his monſtrous maſter *Nero*; and it paſſed thus: *Peter* being ſcourged according to the *Roman* cuſtom, was led to the *Vatican Mount* near the *Tiber*; where he intreated and obtained the favour of the officers, to ſuffer with his head downwards, ſighing and ſaying, *he was far unworthy to die in the poſture of his Lord.*"

up the conformity to death, even the death of the croſs." *Peter did as he was commanded with great alacrity. And that diſciple whom Jeſus loved, ſilently followed him* *."

[I ſhall now almoſt meerly tranſcribe the two laſt ſections of the *Family Expoſitor upon the goſpels*; *a bulky work*, which not many can compaſs: and then ſhall conclude this *previous diſcourſe*.

* There is a ſpirit and tenderneſs in this plain paſſage, which I can never read without the moſt ſenſible emotion. Chriſt *orders* Peter to follow him in token of his readineſs to be crucified in his cauſe. *John* ſtays not for the call; he riſes, and follows too; but he ſays not one word of his love and his zeal. He choſe that the action only ſhould ſpeak that; and when he records this circumſtance, he tells not what that action meant; but with great ſimplicity relates the fact only. If here and there a generous heart, that, like his own, glows with love to Chriſt, ſees and emulates it, be it ſo; but he is not ſolicitous, men ſhould admire it. It was addreſt to his maſter, and it was enough, that he underſtood it. —— And can any one be himſelf baſe enough, to imagine, that ſuch a man could ſpend his life in promoting a pernicious falſehood; (for ſuch, ſays *Doddridge*, in the ninth of my *ten ſermons*, 2d edition, I largely prove the apoſtolic teſtimony to be, if it was a falſehood) Can this be thought; and that at laſt in his old age, when his reliſh for every thing but goodneſs and immortality was gone, he would ſo ſolemnly aſſert the truth of it, as he does in the concluſion of his goſpel? May God deliver every one who reads this, from a head ſo fatally beclouded by the corruptions of the heart! *Family Expoſitor.*

diſcourſe. The notes are added for their remarkable good ſenſe and erudition; but I would adviſe the conſideration of them to come in afterwards, that the continuity of the narrative may be preſerved.]

Quickly after theſe interviews in and about Jeruſalem, *the diſciples went to a mountain in Galilee*, not far from the ſea of Tiberias; *where Jeſus had appointed to meet them. And he appeared to them, and to above five hundred brethren at once*, who came together from all parts of the country upon that important occaſion. *And they ſeeing him, bowed down and worſhipped him: and though ſome of the company doubted at firſt, yet they were afterwards fully convinced* *. *The greater part of theſe continued alive as witneſſes of the reſurrection ſeveral years after* †; *though*

 others

* *They were afterwards fully convinced.*] There is no room to think, that this refers to any of the apoſtles, when Chriſt had ſo lately ſatisfied the moſt incredulous among them. Nor is it eaſy to imagine, how any of the reſt could continue to doubt the truth of the reſurrection, when they actually ſaw him; and that in the preſence of ſo many others, a circumſtance incomparably more convincing to each, than if he had appeared to any one of them alone.

Family Expoſitor.

† ——*Continued alive ſeveral Years after.*] It is generally agreed, that the firſt epiſtle to the *Corinthians* was written at leaſt twenty years after the reſurrection; and there St. Paul tells us, the greater part of theſe

others died in a ſhort time, and went to their glorified and triumphant Lord in heaven. [See 1 Cor. xv. 6.]

But though *Jeſus* ſhowed himſelf thus openly to his diſciples, he *did not appear in public at any time to all the people, nor indeed did he ſhow himſelf, in any other inſtance, to ſo large an aſſembly even of his own followers; for in the ſeveral appearances he made, he chiefly converſed with the apoſtles,* confining his viſits to thoſe witneſſes choſen before by God to atteſt his reſurrection; *who had frequent opportunities of free converſe forty days, and made meals with him, after he roſe from the dead* [See Acts x. 41. Acts i. 2.] *And in theſe converſations, he more particularly opened to them the nature of their office, and through the Holy Ghoſt which he had lately breathed into them, diſpoſed their hearts for the execution of it. Our Lord on one of theſe occaſions ſtirred up their memories, ſaying, theſe are the words I ſpake unto you, while I was yet dwelling among you; that all the things muſt be* exactly *fulfilled, which are written* in the ſcriptures *concerning me,* both *in* the pentateuch, which is called *the law of Moſes, and in the ſucceeding prophets, and in the pſalms* and other poetical

theſe five hundred brethren ſtill continued alive. And it was a wiſe and gracious diſpenſation ſo to prolong their lives; as each of 'em, wherever God diſpoſed of them, would be an authentic witneſs of that important fact, *the reſurrection of our Lord*; great fundamental of the Chriſtian religion. *Family Expoſitor.*

tical books of the Old Teſtament. And *at the ſame time he* not only in words expounded to them the ſenſe of the ſacred writers, but alſo by a ſecret operation on their intellectual faculties *opened their minds, that they might underſtand the ſcriptures* in their reference to Him. And in a moſt convincing manner he enlarged upon the important ſubject *and ſaid*, when you conſider all theſe things, you muſt plainly perceive, that *thus it was written, and thus it was neceſſary that the Meſſiah ſhould ſuffer, and ſhould riſe again from the dead*, as I have done, *on the third day*; *and that*, in conſequence thereof, and upon this great foundation, *repentance and forgiveneſs of ſins ſhould be preached in his name*, and by his authority, *to all the nations of the earth, beginning firſt at Jeruſalem* itſelf, though polluted with the blood of the prince of life (*a*). You know indeed, (added he) how cruelly the Jews have treated me; with what ingratitude rejected me; but their outragious malice has now done it's utmoſt; and God not only has reſcu'd

(*a*) *Though polluted with the blood of the prince of life.*] Gracious and wiſe appointment again; that the goſpel ſhould be firſt preached at Jeruſalem! gracious, as it encouraged the repentance of the greateſt ſinners, when they ſaw even the murtherers of Chriſt not excepted from the offers of goſpel-mercy: wiſe, as hereby chriſtianity was more abundantly atteſted, the facts being publiſhed juſt on the ſpot where they happened. *Family Expoſitor*

me out of their hands, but is exalting me to all that hight of dignity, the holy oracles have ſo ſplendidly deſcribed: For *all authority is given unto me, both in heaven and on earth*; and in accompliſhment of what was promiſed to the Meſſiah, I am rais'd to a kingdom which comprehends both the upper and lower worlds, and entitles me to the homage of angels, as well as of men. And yet, though I could command the miniſtry of thoſe more glorious creatures, it ſuits beſt with the ſcheme of my goſpel to make uſe of you; who ſhall accordingly be witneſſes of all theſe things, by publiſhing the momentous truths of my death and reſurrection (*b*); and who are to look upon it therefore, as the great buſineſs of your lives, to ſpread the notices and evidences of theſe facts. And that you may be fully qualified for ſo high an office, *Behold*, I am ſhortly to *ſend upon you the* grand *Promiſe of the Father*, relating

(*b*) *You ſhall be witneſſes of all theſe things.*] That this was the buſineſs of the apoſtles is evident: and the ingenious author of *Miſcellanea Sacra* (Eſſay 3. p. 17—23.) has taken great pains to ſhow, the title of *witneſſes*, and the office of *teſtifying*, is in the ſacred writings appropriated to them. Yet after all, tho' it was indeed eſſential to the apoſtolic office, that they who bore it ſhould be able to teſtify the facts from their own certain knowledge; yet 'tis undoubted that a great many, beſides the apoſtles, were in a capacity of teſtifying the ſame; and 'twas their duty, and to-be-ſure their care to do it, as providence gave them opportunity. *Family Expoſitor.*

relating to the effuſion of the Holy Spirit on you. (Compare Joel ii. 28. and Acts ii. 16, 17.) And as the Divine Wiſdom ſees fit to honour this city, ſinful as it is, with the firſt view of this ſurprizing appearance, I command you not to go from hence before you have received thoſe gifts and graces, which ſhall be furniſhed to you for the diſcharge of your miniſtry; *but do you continue here in the city of Jeruſalem, 'till you are inveſted with this power from on high*; whereby you will be enabled to bear your teſtimony in ſo advantagious a manner, that no falſehood or ſophiſtry will be able finally to ſtand before you. *And* further he ſaid to them; when you ſhall be thus endowed, *go forth into all parts of the world, and preach the goſpel to every human creature under heaven.* And take care, that you deliver it with becoming ſerioufneſs; and let them ſee to it, that they receive it with proportionable Regard; for it is a matter of infinite importance. Accordingly I now ſolemnly declare, that *he who* ſincerely *believes* your teſtimony, *and* in token of that cordial faith *is baptized* in my name, and continues to maintain a temper and conduct ſuitable to that engagement, *ſhall* certainly *be ſaved* with a compleat and ever-laſting ſalvation: *but he who believeth not* this goſpel of mine, when opened with ſuch

convincing evidence (*c*), and finally perſiſts in his impenitence and unbelief, as he rejects the moſt gracious counſel of God for his recovery, *ſhall be condemned* by his righteous judgment, to future and ever-laſting puniſhment, and ſhall to his dreadful experience find that goſpel, which he has deſpiſed, to be a ſavour of death to HIM. (Life or death, O my ſoul, is the certain iſſue of it, with regard to THEE in particular.— *Be ſurety to thy ſervant, O Lord, for good; and let my life be precious in thy ſight.)* "Obſerve then the extent of your commiſſion, and *go forth*, not only into Judea, but viſit all the reſt of the world, *and proſelyte all nations of the earth* to the faith and obedience of my goſpel (*a*), *baptizing them in the* awful and venerable

(*c*) —*When opened with ſuch convincing evidence.*] This is by no means a proper place to enquire into the proportion between the evidence which was peculiar to the days of the apoſtles, and that which is common to our own. But I hope it will be conſidered, on the one hand how improbable it is, that a divine revelation, introduced as the goſpel was, ſhould be left ſo deſtitute of proofs in after-ages, that an honeſt man, after impartial examination, might reject it; and on the other, how fit it was, that the danger of neglecting it ſhould be ſolemnly declared, leſt it ſhould ſeem itſelf to have left men at liberty to triſle with it. *Family Expoſitor.*

(*a*) *Proſelyte all nations to my goſpel.*] The whole tenor of the ſucceeding books of the New Teſtament ſhews, that *Chriſt* deſigned by this commiſſion, the goſpel ſhould be preached to all mankind without exception:

venerable *Name of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit* (*b*); that by this ſolemn initiatory ordinance they may profeſs their ſubjection to each of theſe divine Perſons, and maintaining ſuitable regards to each, may receive from the ſo reverenced Deity correſpondent bleſſings.

exception: but the prejudices of the apoſtles led them at firſt to miſtake the ſenſe, and imagine it referred only to their preaching the goſpel *to the Jews among all nations*, or to thoſe who ſhould be willing to become Jews.—I render the word μαθητευσατε, *proſelyte*, that it may be duely diſtinguiſhed from διδασκοντες, *teaching*, with which our verſion ſeems to confound it. The former imports inſtruction in the eſſentials of religion, which 'twas neceſſary grown perſons ſhould know and ſubmit to, before baptiſm could be regularly adminiſtered; the latter may relate to thoſe more particular admonitions in regard to chriſtian faith and practice, which were to be built upon that foundation. *Family Expoſitor.*

(*b*) *Baptizing them in the name of the Father, Son, and Spirit.*] Though I dare not aſſert, that the uſe of *theſe very words* is eſſential to chriſtian baptiſm, yet ſurely the expreſſion muſt intimate the neceſſity of ſome diſtinct regard, to Each of the Sacred Three; which is always to be maintained in the adminiſtration of this ordinance; and conſequently it muſt imply, that more was ſaid to thoſe perſons of whoſe baptiſm we read in the Acts—than is there recorded, *before* they were admitted to it. The chriſtian church has acted a wiſe and ſafe part in retaining theſe words; and they contain ſo ſtrong an intimation that Each of Theſe Three Perſons is God, and that Worſhip is to be paid, Glory aſcribed to Each, that I cannot but hope, they will be a means of maintaining the belief of the one, and the practice of the other, among the generality of chriſtians, to the end of the world. *Family Expoſitor.*

And ſee that you inſtruct the converts you thus baptize, *teaching them to keep and obſerve all things whatever I have commanded you*; as remembering, that I am their Lord, and you only the publiſhers of my will. *And* while you perſevere in the purſuance of theſe directions,——though numberleſs difficulties will appear in your way, be not diſcouraged at them; for *behold, I am always with you*, and ſo will be with every faithful miniſter of mine, who ſhall ſucceed you in the work, *even to the end of the world* (c). *Amen.*—Oh bleſſed Jeſus! ſo may it indeed be! may this important promiſe be fulfilled to us and to our ſucceſſors, to the remoteſt ages in its utmoſt extent (d). *And* he beſides added; "ſo far as it is neceſſary and expedient, a miraculous power ſhall attend you and others,

(c) *I am with you, even till the conſummation of all things.*] As Chriſt's preſence with his ſurviving apoſtles and other miniſters, was as neceſſary after the deſtruction of Jeruſalem, as before it, nothing ſeems more unreaſonable than to limit theſe words by ſuch an interpretation. *Family Expoſitor.*

(d) *May the promiſe be fulfilled in its utmoſt extent.*] Though the word *Amen*, with which each of the goſpels concludes, ſeems chiefly intended for an intimation of the end of the book, and as an aſſeveration of the certainty of its contents, yet I think the turn here given to it in St. *Matthew* very natural, conſidering its connection with that promiſe, which was undoubtedly the greateſt ſtrength and joy of that good man's heart. *St. John* uſes the like turn, in more expreſs language, in the laſt verſe but one of *the Revelation*. *Family Expoſitor.*

thers, who ſhall join or ſucceed to you, in the firſt plantation of my church: In particular, *theſe ſigns*, and others no leſs wonderful, *ſhall follow them that believe*, that is, ſhall be performed by thoſe who in a lively manner exerciſe their faith in God, at the time he is inwardly exciting them to ſuch operations (*e*); *In my name they ſhall caſt out* the moſt obſtinate and miſchievous *dæmons*, who have poſſeſſed the bodies of men; *they ſhall* by an extraordinary and hitherto unknown effuſion of my ſpirit, be enabled with the greateſt fluency and propriety to *ſpeak in* various *languages which they have never learnt, they ſhall take up ſerpents* without being bitten or endangered by 'em (*f*); *and if*, by

(*e*) — *At the time God is inwardly exciting them.*] It is exceeding evident, that the word, *believe*, in this place, muſt ſignify ſomething different from that faith, which in the preceeding verſe had been required as indiſpenſably neceſſary to ſalvation; and can have no other rational interpretation, than what's here given. *Family Expoſitor.*

(*f*) — *They ſhall take up ſerpents unendangered.* Iamblichus (vit. Pythagoræ. cap. 8.) ſays, that Pythagoras could do this; and very credible writers have aſſerted, that in the Eaſtern nations there is an art of charming ſnakes and ſerpents by the force of muſic, ſo as for a while to ſuſpend their diſpoſition to hurt. (See *Bochart. Hierozoic.* Pars 2. Lib. 3. Cap. 6. and compare Pſalm. lviii. 4, 5. and Eccles. x. 11.) But this power was undoubtedly exerted without any ſuch artifice, and included (as in the caſe of *Paul*, Acts xxviii.

ſecret or open attempts to deſtroy them, *my Meſſengers drink any deadly* and malignant *poiſon, it ſhall not hurt them (a); and when they ſhall lay their hands on the ſick* and infirm, it ſhall be attended with a healing virtue, and *they ſhall immediately recover* without the uſe of any farther means. So that, in conſequence of ſuch confirmation, my goſpel ſhall meet with a very general reception, and my Heavenly Father, according to promiſe, ſhall give me the heathen for mine inheritance, and the uttermoſt parts of the earth for my poſſeſſion.

Such was the communication Jeſus had with his diſciples, and the commiſſion he gave them: *And now* at length *having gathered them together* on the fortieth day after his reſurrection, *he charged them again as he had done before, not to leave Jeruſalem for their domeſtic affairs, but* rather ſpend ſome ſucceeding days in extraordinary devotion, both in the temple and in their private retirements;

xxviii. 3,—5.) an ability to heal the moſt dangerous wounds, given by the bite of the moſt noxious animals. *Family Expoſitor.*

(a) If by ſome attempt they drink poiſon—] I add this clauſe, that none may imagine God ever intended theſe miraculous powers ſhould be uſed for oſtentation, or to gratify curioſity in vain man. Conſidering to what a pitch of curſed refinement, the art of poiſoning was at this time brought, as well as how frequently execution was done by poiſon in the country where the apoſtles lived, ſuch a promiſe will appear more important, than the reader might at firſt apprehend. *Family Expoſitor.*

tirements; that they might with the fitteſt temper, *wait the accompliſhment of the Father's promiſe, which you have heard* (ſays he) *again and again from me, both before and ſince my reſurrection.* (Compare John xiv. 26. xv. 26: and Luke xxiv. 49.) *For John indeed baptized with water*, when he was ſent to call men to repentance; *but* you well know *he declared* at the ſame time, *there was one coming after him who ſhould baptize* in more glorious ſort, even *with the holy Spirit. And* in fullfilment of this prediction, ye being now to bear witneſs of me as the true Meſſiah, *ſhall* (not many daies hence) *be baptized with* a very uncommon effuſion of *the holy Spirit. He then* brought them out of Jeruſalem, and paſſing over the brook Cedron differently from before, *led them* through the Mount of Olives *as far as the boundaries of Bethany. Now* as they apprehended ſomething uncommon, *they ſaid to him; ſure, Lord, thou wilt not at this time*, when they have committed ſuch aggravated wickedneſs, *reſtore the kingdom to Iſrael? But Jeſus* declining a debate, *ſilenced them with theſe words*; whatever the ſchemes of providence may be, "*It is not for you to arrogate to yourſelves the knowledge of ſeaſons, which the Father has placed under his own authority.* Leave curioſity about ſecret things, and attend to inſtant duty: *the Meſſiah, and, with him, the Iſrael of God, ſhall*

ſhall reign without an oppoſer; that's enough. Ye are now to gather in ſubjects to his kingdom from the remoteſt corners of the earth." *Jeſus then lifting up his hands* in a moſt ſolemn manner, *bleſs'd them as one that had Right* not only to deſire, but command a bleſſing on 'em; *and* committed them to the care of his heavenly Father; to Whom, after ſo long an abode on earth, he was now returning. For *while he breaths forth his ſoul in their favour, and they fix their eyes upon him with the ſtricteſt obſervation, the Lord is taken up* by his own power from the ground, *and* gradually *elevated into heaven (b)*; *and* as he hovered in the air at ſome diſtance from 'em, *a* bright *cloud*, the triumphal car on this occaſion, appeared from God, and *received him out of their ſight:* and paſſing through ranks of adoring angels, he aſcended to a throne highly exalted above theirs, even to the top of authority, at the right hand of God; there to reign in the glories of his mediatorial kingdom, till all things ſhould be put under his feet.

— *And*

(b) *While they beheld, he is lifted up into heaven.*] Mr. *Jennings* has obſerved with his uſual ſagacity and propriety (Serm. at *Berry-ſtreet*, Vol. I. p. 373.) that it was much more proper our Lord ſhould aſcend to heaven in the ſight of his apoſtles, than that he ſhould riſe from the dead in their ſight: For his reſurrection was proved when they ſaw him alive after his paſſion; but they could not ſee him in heaven while they continued on earth. *Family Expoſitor.*

And as they were ſtedfaſtly looking up to heaven, while he went on in his amazing and triumphant progreſs, *two angels in* the form of men glittering in *white array, came near and ſaid, Ye men of Galilee, why gaze you there* with ſuch great aſtoniſhment? Did not the Lord himſelf tell you, he was to return ſoon to the abode of glory which he left? And *God* on this illuſtrious event, *has ſent us to aſſure you, that as you have beheld* the bright *Jeſus go into heaven, ſo ſhall he deſcend in a golden cloud,* attended with a mighty hoſt of angels, to paſs an irreverſible ſentence upon each individual that ever inhabited the earth. In the mean time you muſt no more expect his company." *And the diſciples* were ſo ſatisfied of his Divine Glory, that they *worſhipped Him,* though now inviſible; *and then returned to Jeruſalem rejoicing,* that their Lord was thus ſingularly honoured by his Father, and would be able to protect all his followers, and provide effectually for their preſent and eternal happineſs. And *they were always in the temple*; that is, conſtantly attended at the hours of prayer (*a*), *praiſing and bleſſing God*; which

(*a*) *They were always in the temple.*] It is not to be imagined, that the apoſtles dwelt for ſometime afterwards in an *upper chamber of the temple*. They had no ſuch intereſt with the prieſts, as would allow us to ſuppoſe,

which they did at home and abroad. *Amen!* May God be magnified wherever his goſpel arrives, for the atteſtations given to it by theſe his ſervants, and through them to us.

And in a few days after this, their aſcended Lord, mindful of his promiſe, *ſent down* as a royal donative *the extraordinary influences of his ſpirit upon them,* to qualify them for the important office to which they were appointed. *And going forth* with this furniture, *they preached the goſpel* throughout the whole Roman Empire, and even among the barbarous nations, *the Lord co-operating, and confirming the word of his grace by ſubſequent miracles*; at once the moſt ſolid, as well as obvious and moſt popular demonſtrations of the truths they delivered. *Amen:* So may the Lord's preſence, as the occaſion requires, ever be with his faithful miniſters: may his goſpel be attended with plain evidences of its authority, eſtabliſhing and crowning it with the largeſt proſperity; that the knowledge

ſuppoſe, theſe would permit them to lodge in one of the ſacred apartments. It is ſufficient they were always there at proper times: for well we know, that by night the temple was ſhut up. They probably joined their voices with the chorus of the Levites, as no doubt other pious Iſraelites did: and muſt ſurely, from what they had already ſeen and known, have learned to uſe many of the pſalms ſung by them, in a much ſublimer ſenſe, than the generality of people could do. *Family Expoſitor.*

knowledge of the Lord may fill the earth, as the waters cover the channel of the ſeas.

Many other ſigns Jeſus wrought, both before and after his reſurrection, *in the preſence of his diſciples, which are not recorded in this book: and indeed are ſo numerous, that* if every thing ſhould be penned with its peculiar circumſtances, I am perſuaded the work would ſwell to ſo vaſt a bulk, *the world itſelf could not receive the books that would be written:* but the very ſize of the volumes muſt needs prevent, in the general, people's procuring or reading them (*b*). *But theſe* moſt neceſſary and important *things are ſet down*, not for the amuſement

(*b*) *The world could not receive the books.*] There would be no great inconvenience in allowing an hyperbole here, as moſt expoſitors do; of which we meet with other inſtances in ſcripture: (See *Gen.* ix. 4. *Numb.* xiii. 33. and compare *John* xii. 19.) But I think the ſenſe given in the paraphraſe eaſier, and more ſuited to the remarkable plainneſs of St. *John*'s ſtyle. *Elſner* explains this paſſage as if the apoſtle had ſaid, "That, ſhould all particulars be written, the unbelieving world would not *admit them* ſo as to be moved thereby to faith and obedience." And he produces inſtances in which the Greek word (χωρειν) has ſuch a ſignification. But as *John* knew the unbelieving world would reject what he *had writ*, this could be no reaſon for his writing no more. —— Perhaps it may be a moſt delightful part of the entertainment of the heavenly world, to learn from our bleſſed Lord himſelf, or from thoſe who converſed with him on earth, a multitude of ſuch particulars of his life, as will be well worthy our everlaſting admiration.

amuſement of the reader with ſo curious a ſtory; but that the faith — hope — and piety of chriſtians ——may be well confirmed: and eſpecially *that you may* more ſtrongly and aſſuredly *believe, that Jeſus is the Meſſiah, very God of very God*, partaking of the Same Divine Glory with the Father, and the ſure Object of his peoples confidence; *and that believing*, you may be ſo influenced by his inſtructive diſcourſes, his compleat example, and DYING LOVE, that *you may have* eternal *life through His Name*. And O may God grant, that as it is moſt certainly and circumſtantially true, ſo it may have that happy effect upon all by whom this hiſtory is peruſed, from age to age. Amen.

Improvement to the SOUL.

Thus did our glorious *Saviour aſcend on high, and* moſt triumphantly *lead captivity captive: the chariots of God* which attended him, *were twenty thouſand, even thouſands of angels*: and being *gone into heaven, he is* there ſeated *on the right hand of God: while angels and authorities,*

admiration. In the mean time, the pious and attentive ſtudy of what is here recorded, may moſt happily prepare us for ſuch diſcoveries, and add an unutterable reliſh to them. Amen. So may it continue to the *author of theſe notes*; ſo be it to thoſe that labour in the ſame field, and to the perſons who enjoy their labours.

thorities, and powers are made ſubject to him. Let *us*, his humble followers, *look after him* with holy joy, and pleaſing expectation, congratulating his triumphs, and truſting through his grace to ſhare in them. Like the apoſtles let us *bow down and worſhip him:* and while we continue here below, let us make it our daily labour and care, to *ſeek thoſe things which are above, where Chriſt ſitteth at the right hand of God.* And inſtead of amuſing ourſelves with the vain dreams of temporal grandeur and felicity, or with curious inquiries after thoſe *times and ſeaſons, which the Father has reſerved in his own power*, let us apply with vigour to the buſineſs he in his wiſdom, has aſſigned us: labouring to the utmoſt to promote his goſpel, and by a zealous improvement of our time and opportunities, prepare for his final appearance, when the Lord ſhall deſcend from heaven with more ſplendor than he returned, and publicly come *in the glory of his Father, and his own glory*, with a pomp which *every eye will ſee*, and a trumpet, which even all the nations of *the dead ſhall hear.* In the interim, let us again thankfully own his gracious *preſence with his diſciples* he left behind; and with admiring gratitude reflect upon the happy conſequences of that preſence, in the eſtabliſhment of the goſpel in the world, and its tranſmiſſion to us in ſo remote

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an age and country. Let us eſpecially praiſe him for THESE SACRED RECORDS which contain ſo authentic and exact an account of facts we are all ſo nearly concerned in; records more valuable (unſpeakably more valuable) than the writings of our private eſtates, or the charters of our public liberties.—Let us earneſtly pray, that their great deſign may be anſwered in *us*, and make it our importunate petition to him who is the Beſtower of all grace, that through the operations of the life-giving ſpirit, (without the influence of which even ſcripture itſelf, with all our advantages for underſtanding it, will be but a *dead letter*) our faith may be confirmed and nouriſhed by every portion of it we read; and our hearts ſo delivered into the mold of the divine word, that believing on Chriſt *under all the characters he bears*, we may have life through his name, *at length* receiving the end of our faith in the compleat ſalvation of our ſouls through Him; to Whom, with the Father, and the Eternal Spirit, be undivided honours and everlaſting praiſes.—Amen, and Amen.

The CONCLUSION.

Now, O Chriſtian (*ſo called*) loveſt thou this all-kind Saviour? I do not ſay as he deſerves (that thou canſt not,) but as

as thou *oughteſt and may'ſt?* —— Do you claſp him in your ſoul's embrace, as your ſingular joy, your raviſhing expectancy, your boſom-filling delight? Diſplay you the natural and never-wanting mark of affection himſelf (unexceptingly) lays down; "*If a man love me, he will keep my words.*" Read now what *his ſpirit* injoins you by the evangeliſts and apoſtles. —Give hereupon, O conſcience, an anſwer to thy God.——Trembling anſwer I doubt. And did the moſt high God's Equal Son ſtoop ſo low? Was He diſemboſomed from His ever-glorious Father—becoming a man of ſorrows and acquainted with grief, and died the death of a guilty ſlave, to be ſlighted by *thee?* Oh wondrous wretch, thou cutteſt the faithful heart to pieces.

And ye, O deiſts, will you, encompaſt thus with proofs againſt you, ſtill reject this meſſenger of God's high will? Ah, could you but, diveſted of a refined and therefore unperceived pride, think with true ſobriety for one moment!—I don't ſay the love of brutal pleaſure makes you ſtand out; I believe I ſhould in the general, wrong you if I did. But were you, as being *entirely indebted creatures*, to reflect never ſo little, you would immediately bow to Jeſus's ſcepter. For is it not upon your exact performance of all relative duties and moral virtues, that you look for acceptance

tance with God?——But now; were it poſſible for pen to delineate a true chriſtian to you, I ſhould quite amaze you; dear friends, I ſhould. O to expreſs with what ſcrupulous ſolicitude he maintains and adds vigour to the domeſtic and ſocial ties! O to paint his keenly nice attention in watching the moſt remote movements of his heart, that he may refine them with divine help from every earthly bias; purifying himſelf even as God is pure! And as the Lord's dying love is the forcible motive and indiſſoluble bond of all this perfection, ſo doth excellent humility, from a ſenſe of his being by grace what-ever he is, preſerve it in it's every operation. You are not, therefore, for moral virtues, at all upon a footing with the chriſtian. But he has a Jeſus beſides.—— Now if, in the deciſive event of matters, this Jeſus ſhould prove the ſinequonon, the thing of indiſpenſable neceſſity for happineſs, What muſt become of *you?*

Oh let not my pained heart bleed in your caſe to no purpoſe; but may you yet be wiſe for eternity, dear fellow-men! You would keep the words of Jeſus, I am ſure, could I prevail with you; for you have too much ſenſe to be antinomians, *Non-obſervers of the law.* —— Hear you, however, my proteſtation: far, far be it from me, to intermit an inſtant doing the works of an heart-conquered creature!

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—As far be it, to truſt in my defective works (which bloodbought grace enables me to do at all) for my final acceptance with God. Clothe me, O compleat robe of righteouſneſs, and garment of everlaſting ſalvation. In thine infinite merits, O tranſcendent Chriſt, through faith imputed to *me*, I ſhall ſtand in the latter day (as ſtand you and I muſt) approved even by all-pure and all-ſeeing eyes. And oh! thou framer and controuler of the heart, give to my prayer theſe obſtinate ſelf-deſtroyers. Thy grace retrieved me from among them, uſe me for thy lowly inſtrument in retrieving them. Give me one deiſt. Nay, grant them all. Chriſt's blood was ſhed: Lord give them.

End of the Previous Diſcourſe.

A Cloſe

A

Cloſe View of DEATH

AND

Its Subſequent Immortalities.

LOOK at that head (*a*): inſpect, I tell thee, yonder ſkull, from whoſe right eye-hole ſlides forth the ſilent devourer. Whom tell I? Thee in particular, thou man of taſte, who determineſt to have thy pride fomented, thy palate pampered, thy lechery gratified, thy dreſs diſtinguiſhed, thine houſe ornamented. Thou doſt look inquiſitively. Then whereſoever thou art, may this thought be thy companion; that quite as certainly the worm will perforate that orb of thine, which now collected to a point, darts into this ſight of mortality.

With what frightful howlings, accents of woe hardly human, and frame-ſhaking agonies thy mother produced thee into the world!——A tenderneſs of care (how unſpeakable) ſucceeded to it! —— For many years her aking ſolicitude about thee! How your rational powers unfolded, and enlarged

(*a*) See the Frontiſpiece.

enlarged themſelves through culture, to the very beſt advantage,—gradually growing up to their preſent maturity! And was all this, that you might the reſt of your life revel in the pleaſures of a brute, and uſe your improved mind only to amuſe an idle hour, or form projects of advancement in a fleeting world? Think never ſo little ſolidly, and I am ſure it is impoſſible you ſhould entertain ſuch a notion. But be dextrous as you will in warding ſerious thoughts, death you find will come,—and as ſure next, immediately enſues the judgment; when God who gave you a holy law, furniſhed to your fallen nature a Saviour, and (Therein) a ſufficiency of all grace, will call for the produce of each of your talents, of all your numerous opportunities. What, therefore, thou haſt the means to do, do it, God helping, with thine utmoſt might.——Cold there and impotent thine head will reſt, that now is in a *vain* ferment with ſchemes of lucre or ambition, and teems with meditations deep, but *vain*. Doth a clear, ſtrong, quick conception, a maſtery of words, with learned accompliſhments, diſtinguiſh you in talking?—Talk for the Giver of your Being, and flow with doubly happy elocution: yet ſet not by the applauſe of the company at all, but as it advances your influence with them in reſpect of their precious ſouls:

evidence

evidence to them beyond ſuſpicion, that you carry no other thought upon your heart; with a moſt ſelfabaſed ſpirit render all the glory to God, who is intitled alone to glory, and ever will deſerve more honour at our hands, than it is poſſible for us to preſent to him. Can you really handle the arduous pen, and don't you flatter yourſelf?—Muſter up all the faculties of your mind, ſtrain them to the very topmoſt exertion, and write moſt ſoul-alarming, ſoul-edifying ſtrictures for love of him who died, that we might have whither to flee from eternal death. But always remember, that *thou muſt die* from this world; and that will make thee chaſte, humble, juſt, and not dare offend thine omnipotent maker, before whoſe tribunal (who now indeed is all around and within thee, but then thou ſhalt have proof of) death is about to ſet thee.

Unfurniſhed of theſe and the other virtues, my brother raiſes a building upon mere ſand; for as the beatific viſion is annexed to purity of heart, the Impure certainly ſhall *not ſee God*.

NOW; ſince man's table ſo often becomes a peculiar ſnare to him, I would fetch from the ſame expanſion a corrective image of the grave. We will figure the interſecting crevice, when the leaf is up, to be that receptacle of all mortals.——

Set

ſet out now from the border as from the cradle, and, ſoon as capable of choice, fix upon what path you will, you ſtill make a ſlant thither. Stand where you are you cannot, for God impreſſes inceſſantly a progreſſive motion on nature. Some, leading a vicious life, paſs rapidly the intermediate ſpace: others, by regularity and a judicious care, move onward a ſlow pace, with a difference of the hour-hand to the minute-hand of a clock: but whether they poſt, they poſt that way; or creeping, they creep and drop in there. We may go (*ſtill in edging to the grave*) from an inclement ſky to a balmy, more favourable climate, *as paſs your finger from one to the other ſide of the table*; but in every place that all-abſorbing gulph prevalently commands. Learn then ſo to number thy certainly fleeting days, as to apply thy heart, the property of God, to ſubſtantial wiſdom; that in the end of all tranſitory things, thou may'ſt obtain mercy and a happy life, from the Unlimited Judge of quick and dead.

Come, let us pry, my friends, into the other ſightleſs orb. I ſee all is conſumed, except a rim of livid ſkin, and the pupil which has ſtood it ſtouter than the reſt;—yet this, rotted away in the center, preſents to view a ſmall, but not the leſs rueful hollow. *Now what* its fruit of darting

the emphatical looks of luſt (*a*)? Friends, how feel you? The ſight is to me moſt profitably affecting. This was a buſtling piece of clay, but all his activity promoted earthly deſigns; ſmall fervour ſhowed he to his God, with Whom alone he now has to do: No: he was pleaſed to mock, not honour God, with lazy prayer.

Lo! the teeth are, moſt of them, ſtill firm in their ſockets. —— How often were theſe diſplayed daintily, when thou didſt ſtrive to laugh down chriſtian mortification! Could wiſdom fetched from the heaven of heavens, the ſolideſt ſenſe in the moſt beautiful language, and often by a ſilver-toned voice conveyed to thee, could it, I ſay not, affect thee with a tender ſorrow for ſin, but ſo muc has repreſs and ſilence thy worthleſs ridicule? No: thou playedſt thy buffoon-talent off remarkably, that with the laugh of the company thou might'ſt quaſh him, whoſe heart in diſtreſs for thee though unknown, faſter bled than his tongue could form words. How are portions dealt now?— Thou art (too probably) *gone to thine own place*, where devils torment and grin at their exquiſite dupe: but *that derided Merit* is ſwallowed up in God without meaſure bleſſing. We ſee the caſket you took pains with, defiled

(*a*) The ſubject of our contemplation is ſuppoſed to be the corpſe of a bad liver; whoſe ſtory is well remembered.

defiled and rottting: whereas the unperiſhable jewel left by you rough and ſhapeleſs, remains now unalterable.——And it was not in your power, though it grew your guilty wiſh, to reduce to nothing a Being you brought not out of nothing: Its future condition only lay in your breaſt; and by a final ſeparation from God, O eternal fool, thou haſt made it without remedy miſerable.

We will caſt our eyes upon the ſtomach: How quietly comes abroad the well-crammed ſlider! Now to figure that its paſſionate owner — who could not digeſt an unpalatable word, no, nor a diſreſpectful look! What a ſtir did every trifle excite *there?* Alas the total alteration. But ſee, a luſtier browzer from the belly, has eat his way into the damp air.——O to think what rich-prepared dainties, what high-flavoured wines, were purchaſed for that foul bed of worms! From hence ſprung fumes, that clogged the agil faculties of the ſoul, murthering hours many, given for probation below. Poor ſenſualiſt, the gout at length twiſted your ſinews, wrenched, diſlocated, the extreme joints of your frame. Thus run out your life:—Not in viſiting the ſick with your bounty, and preſence too, the one no leſs comfortable than the other:——Not in refreſhing Chriſt in the perſon of his confined member, or however, his creature; yet for *you* died *that*

Chriſt.—Oh what an oppoſite you. Grief muſt indeed rend my heart, if I vent it not in a wiſh over you. And oh hadſt thou but mortified this fleſh periſhing in our ſight! Then the eye of thy mind unobſtructed by darkening paſſions, had been ſagacious to perceive the ſervice of God in his creatures, and thine hand then had been hale to put it in execution. How careful in ſeparating objects of compaſſion from undeſerving perſons: how judicious in adapting thy relief to them, hadſt thou been! The ſun of righteouſneſs with ſteddy beams, illuminating thy heart, thou hadſt known the doctrine that is of God, even all that concerned thine ever-laſting peace. But alas! too lazy to burſt the ſhell of future realities, you committed your frail bark to an unknown ocean, ſet your top-gallant, which *the God of this world* filled with a delectable, but falſe-whiſpering breeze, that bore you along buoyant over the dimpling ſurge: till your bottom ſtruck on a ſunken rock, and you entered with pale affright the overwhelming flood.

Give us benefit, O father of lights, from our mournful contemplation. What now: if this ghaſtly object for a while reanimate ſhould ſpeak to us for our inſtruction? Hark: *(Lord have mercy)* it addreſſes us indeed.—"Children of men, tramplers of the ground that contains your fathers,

fathers, and ſoon to be trampled over by your ſons! How long with hearts void of underſtanding, will you be cheated by lying vanities, that make many a magnificent promiſe, but leave you tortured for ever with deſpair in the end? Search out your ſpirits. ——Have you habitually a loving truſt in God; or regard ye him as a hateful ſovereign:—while ye addreſs to the creatures for happineſs and ſupport? Doubtleſs the Beſt of Beings is unpleaſing to *you*, if you feel not yourſelves reconciled to him by the blood of his ſon, and perceive not within you the ſpirit of adoption, cordially crying under all poſſible circumſtances, "*My God!--Holy—Righteous——Father!*" Hath Jeſus dying loved you into love? Remember, remember, God is love: — Who does unintermitting good to his unjuſt enemies, never holding his ſupermunificent hand. In caſe of your diſſonance to him, you ſhall not hereafter, come into his only happy ſociety, nor indeed have a capacity of taſting the Supreme Excellence, That Eſſence of eſſences. But like will and muſt ſort with like, and devils be the ever-raging aſſociates of your infernal natures. Look here, look with attention at theſe feet of mine; they as at preſent yours, tripped to fullfil a vain wicked mind: but motionleſs and ſtenchy now lie thoſe vigorous muſcles, and are of no uſe, unleſs the ſight impel you to tread the rugged, but

love-gilded path of chriſtianity." He has ceaſed. How are ye? My boldeſt blood is chilled. God make the impreſſion laſting as extraordinary!

It will beſt appear from the *ancient* followers of Chriſt, how operative were chriſtian principles upon the human mind. The learned Dr. *Cave* wrote a very valuable hiſtory of the primitive believers: but it unhappily tires by many a trifling ſtory.——And as the ſtyle of that book is ſomewhat obſolete, I apprehend, I cannot do a better ſervice than by new-writing it.

Primitive

Primitive CHRISTIANITY.

PART I.

CHAP. I.

Things charged upon the ancient chriſtians, reſpecting their religion.

NO ſooner did the Son of God appear on earth, to eſtabliſh the moſt excellent religion that ever was, but he met with the fierceſt and moſt vigorous oppoſition. Perſecuted and doomed to death as ſoon as born: he was purſued all his life with freſh aſſaults of malice and cruelty: his credit blaſted with ſlanders, his doctrine rejected and derided, and himſelf at laſt put to death with every aggravation of torture and diſgrace. Now if the world

thus treated the maſter of the houſe, they would hardly better reſpect them of the houſhold: Therefore, commiſſioning the apoſtles to promulgate his religion, the Lord pre-informed them what ſort of reception they muſt expect from the world: *That he ſent them forth as ſheep in the midſt of wolves:* — *That they ſhould be delivered up to the councils, and ſcourged in the ſynagogues* — *be brought before kings and governours.* — *in fine, be hated of all men for his name's ſake.* Nay, ſo high ſhould the religious broil riſe, that men would *betray their moſt intimate friends: and children trampling on the deareſt affection, cauſe their parents to be put to death.* Our Lord knew for certain, all this would attend chriſtianity at its firſt appearance: indeed ſuch was the nature of its doctrine, as could ſcarce avoid the diſpleaſure of men. A doctrine calling off from ſelf-gratification, and over-ruling the ſtrongeſt biaſſes of fleſh and blood: — That required men to *take up their daily croſs, and follow the ſteps of a poor crucified Saviour.* Then it introduced new rites and ceremonies: it either revealed, or brought to a clear light, truths not only oppoſit to the courſe of education, but ſome that paſſed natural comprehenſion, too deep for the line of human reaſon to fathom. Upon theſe accounts, mighty were the prejudices, and very powerful the oppoſition chriſtianity was ſure to encounter:

counter: and no ſooner did the apoſtles publiſh it, but it was everywhere ſpoken againſt. For ſeveral ages, the greateſt powers and polities of the world, made a point of extirpating it out of their dominions. And if malice, ſubtlety, ſtrength, and cruelty could have ſtifled this religion, it had been entirely ſuppreſt in its infancy. But though from all quarters of the ſky the ſtorm poured down, chriſtianity like a garden-lilly, ſhaking off the burthen of rain, reared a majeſtic and unſpotted head. *Tertullian* told their enemies, *that by every deed of barbarity, they only excited others to embrace the party: the oftener Chriſt's ſoldiers were mowed down, the faſter ſprouted others afreſh, chriſtian blood fattening the church's ſoil.* Wherefore the enemy of mankind varied his attack, and laboured to undermine the place, that was not to be carried by ſtorm. He prejudices men againſt the chriſtian religion, as a fertil ſource of enormities, and accuſes the chriſtians of every crime that could make them moſt odious.

The things charged upon them, either affected their outward profeſſion, or moral behaviour; with ſome matters relating to the Object and manner of their worſhip. We ſhall view them in order, and the chriſtians defence of themſelves from thoſe imputations.

Chriſtianity on its coming abroad, was moſtly taxt with impiety and novelty: the common cry repreſented it a ſyſtem of irreligion, and innovation. Chriſtians were every where accounted atheiſts; and *Julian* ſeldom ſpeaks of chriſtianity by any other name than *the blaſphemy*. In anſwer to this charge, the chriſtians pleaded,

Firſt, That the generality of the *Gentiles* were incompetent judges of this caſe, being almoſt wholly ignorant of the true chriſtian doctrine. Thus when *Creſcens* the philoſopher defamed the chriſtians as impious and atheiſtical, *Juſtin Martyr* anſwered, that he talked about things he did not underſtand.——But in ſlandering the doctrine of Chriſt at the ſame time he was ignorant of it, he ſhowed a moſt unfair diſpoſition. Or if he had a juſt notion of it, then he appeared more diſingenuous and malicious, in charging upon it what he knew to be falſe. But *Juſtin* was well convinced, *Creſcens* laboured under a pitiable ignorance of chriſtianity, having formerly conferred with him upon this matter; and therefore offered the Roman Senate (to whom he then preſented his apology,) that if they had not heard the ſum of what paſt between them, he would hold a diſputation with him before the Senate itſelf: — But if it was arrived to their knowledge, he doubted not they were ſenſible,

ſible, the poor philoſopher was a meer ignorant in the affair.

Secondly, They did in one light confeſs the charge; and even claimed want of faith in, yes, and utter enmity againſt the heathen deities. The gods of you *Gentiles*, ſay they, are at moſt but dæmons, unclean ſpirits, who have long impoſed upon mankind, and by their ſophiſtries, villanies, and arts of terror, have ſo ſcared the common people, who judge of things by appearance more than reaſon, that theſe meer devils they entitle gods, and affix to each the name he chuſes to aſſume." Now that they were in reality evil ſpirits, the chriſtians manifeſted beyond denial, at every turn forcing them to confeſs it, while by prayer to the true God, they ejected 'em from poſſeſſed perſons.

Thirdly, In the right conception of atheiſm, the chriſtians ſtrongly repelled the accuſation, appealing to their bittereſt enemies, whether people of their principles could reaſonably be termed atheiſts. None pleaded like them for the Being of One God, the Maker that rules His works with unfathomable wiſdom, almighty power; no men forwarder to produce a clear confeſſion of their faith, as to this fundamental of religion. Though (ſays their apologiſt) we own ourſelves atheiſts with regard to thoſe you make gods of; yet not ſo, toward the undoubted Deity, inexhauſtible

tible fountain of wiſdom,—righteouſneſs, — of all excellencies and perfections;—— who is infinitely free from the leaſt contagion of evil. Him and His Only begotten Son, Inſtructor of *us* together with the good angels, in theſe myſteries, —— and *the Spirit of prophecy*, we worſhip and honour in the loweſt depth of our ſouls; that is; in truth: and there is the higheſt reaſon for ſo doing. Now how can you for ſhame call them *No-God men*, who do homage to the great Lord of all, not indeed with incenſe and fleſh of beaſts (which we are ſufficiently taught He needeth not,) but with praiſes and prayers preſented to him by His Chriſt, in Whom he is well pleaſed; knowing it the only honour really worthy of him; not to make a vain conſumption of the creatures He hath given for our nouriſhment, but to celebrate rational hymns and ſacrifices, pouring out our hearts as a grateful return for the good things we have received, and for thoſe too we firmly yet expect from Him.

Here is an aſtoniſhment (ſays *Arnobius!*) we are reproached — worried — for introducing a ſet of impious rites. But, ye men of reaſon, dare you lay ſuch an indictment? To lift up deprecating, to lift up glowing, to lift up rejoicing jubilating hearts to the father of mercies and giver of benefits, to adore the ruler of all principalities ſtooping to us mean worms, ren-

der

der Him the moſt obſequious ſervices love can pay, under an afflicted ſtate lay hold of Him with all our powers, and ever to look up to him : — Is this a black execrable religion : — a worſhip full of ſacriledge and impiety ? Is this that enormity and prodigy of a crime, for which you rage in this manner againſt us, confiſcating our eſtates, baniſhing our perſons, burning, racking, tearing us to death with unimaginable tortures ? We chriſtians are no other than worſhippers of the God of nature. Sift the Matter thoroughly, it is what we deſire, and you will find nothing beſides in our religion. This and only this, is the motive and aim of our divine offices ; before *Him* we are wont to fall proſtrate ; *Him* with common devotions we addreſs ; from *Him* we beg things juſt and right, —— ſuch as are not unworthy of Him to hear and grant." Herein *Arnobius* painted chriſtians to the life : ſuch ſmall grounds were there for branding the men with atheiſm.

CHAP.

CHAP. II.

Of the novelty charged upon chriſtianity.

"THEN it was an upſtart religion; only of yeſterday: whereas paganiſm had floated its ſtreamers from ages and generations." This indictment was laid early.—— When St. *Paul* diſcourſed at *Athens*, we find it the firſt thing charged upon him; *That he was a ſetter-forth of ſtrange Gods, becauſe he preached to them Jeſus and the Reſurrection.* And the pagans purſued the charge with great vehemence in ſucceeding times. "It is upon your tongue to object againſt us (ſays *Arnobius*,) that our worſhip is of new invention, and it would ill become you to forſake the religion of your country." And *Euſebius* tells us the heathens reaſoned thus: "What ſtrange profeſſion of piety and novel manner of devotion have we here; in which are diſcernible neither the rites among us in *Greece*, nor thoſe in uſe with any of the barbarous nations? Who can deny the impiety of this ſect; who have revolted from the cuſtoms of their fathers, and a way of ſerving their gods, which has been in practice time immemorial, both among the Greeks and Barbarians." Nay, after chriſtianity had for ſome centuries

centuries been the eſtabliſhed religion, and rooted out all others or driven them into corners, we find its enemies harping ſtill upon that ſtring. The learned emperor Julian writing to *Alexandria* concerning the Galileans (ſo he ſcornfully termed the chriſtians,) calls the goſpel, that *new doctrine* zealouſly propagated." The title *Lucian* long before beſtowed upon it, when ſpeaking of our Saviour, he ſtyles him the great man crucify'd in *Paleſtine*, who introduced that new religion into the world.

The chriſtians put in two eſpecial pleas to this indictment. *Firſt*, THAT the charge was not true: for beſides that many principles of chriſtianity flowed from the law of nature, the chriſtian religion was for ſubſtance the ſame with that of the Jews, whoſe worſhip claimed ſeniority of all others. The ancient patriarchs were the chriſtians of the old world, who had one common faith. And how high their priority run to the oldeſt Gentiles, *Homer* and *Heſiod*, (for even the exiſtence of an *Orpheus* is probably fabulous,) and to their very Gods, is abundantly proved by many of the ancient fathers; there being at the eaſieſt computation, between Moſes and Homer (whom *Paterculus* places a hundred and twenty years before Heſiod) the diſtance of ſix hundred years. Nay *Cadmus* (the firſt inventor of letters among

among the Grecians,) was ſome ages junior to Moſes. But beſides; whatever of excellence and uſe the heathen founders of religion vented, it was palpably ſtolen from the compoſures of the ancient Jews, as by *Tertullian* and *Euſebius* is demonſtrated even to ſatiety. Deep drank their poets and philoſophers of the fountain of the prophets, and thence under a cunning diſguiſe publiſhed their moſt celebrated notions. So, thus conſidered, chriſtianity is the oldeſt religion in the world.

Secondly, ADMIT it [but in a very limited ſenſe,] to be of later date than the Gentile worſhip; 'twas pleaded ſtrongly, that no axiom is clearer than that we ought to change for the better, and not remain vaſſals of erroneous doctrine, when wholſome is propoſed to us." We can prove (ſays Arnobius) this terrible crime of innovation upon the oldeſt ages of the world; that firſt lived in a very mean ſtate, but as they came to know better, laid aſide their old cuſtoms. Now do you blame them for changing beaſts ſkins for convenient cloathing, and rocks and caves for ſweet and commodious habitations? And are not you yourſelves alwáys enterprizing, and improving; but ſtill, when you engage in new ſchemes your conduct condemns thoſe you purſued before. Therefore, inſtead of this outcry of apoſtacy, it becomes you to weigh the merits

merits of the cauſe; not irrationally to reproach us with what we have left, but examine impartially what we have adopted into its room." And ſuch an anſwer St. *Ambroſe* ſmartly gives; "Our religion (you ſay) is novel, and yours ancient; and what does this either hurt our cauſe, or help yours? If ours be new, it will in time become old. Is yours old? There was a time when 'twas new, The goodneſs and authenticity of a religion is not to be determined by the length of its ſtanding, but appears from the excellency of its worſhip: nor are we in any ſort ſo intereſted to know when it began, as whether it points us to the rational object of adoration.

CHAP. III.

Things charged upon the chriſtians reſpecting their outward condition.

ANother way of making believers the marks of contempt and ill uſage, was by ſaying "They are an inconſiderable ſet of people; and of no ſort of conſequence, throw themſelves into which ſcale they will; for they can't add the leaſt weight to any cauſe." Yet, as popular clamour don't ſtudy conſiſtency, the foes

foes of ſelf-denial bellowed, "Theſe new devotioniſts are not an uſeleſs only, but a very miſchievous body of men. They ſubvert the whole world, raiſe tumults." [*The caſe was, they, the chriſtians, were* tumultuouſly *diſturbed.*] "They make great uneaſineſs in families." *Why, to-be-ſure one awakened perſon in a houſe would talk to the reſt about their ſouls.*

Celſus objected thus; "Let no man offer himſelf, that's learned, wiſe, and prudent; for they hold all this unlawful. — But if any one is illiterate, and almoſt a changeling, oh he's welcome: by which they openly declare; none but fools, people void of all ſenſe and reaſon, ſlaves and ſilly women, are proper votaries of their God. We may obſerve (ſo he runs on) theſe vagrant mountebanks, bragging great matters to the vulgar,—not in the preſence of wiſe men, (for they dare not,) but wherever they ſpy a flock of weak ſimple people, there they croud in. You ſhall ſee weavers, taylors, and the moſt ignorant fellows, when they can gather a few ſickbrained women by themſelves, ſtart up quite oracles for inſtruction; you won't find men of ſuch capacity as they."

Origen replys; "That the chriſtian doctrine invites to wiſdom; that St. Paul enumerates knowledge and wiſdom in the firſt rank of divine gifts; that if he any where

where throws out a reflection on human abilities and learning (which probably gave riſe to this charge) he only cenſures its abuſe bloating the mind; never intending to condemn the thing itſelf.—That when he cites the properties of a real biſhop, *an overſeer of the church*, he requires in him for a neceſſary qualification, *that he be apt to teach, and* ABLE *by ſound doctrine both to exhort, and convince the gainſayers.* We do not prohibit the wiſe, learned, and prudent, provided you don't exclude the ſimple, raw, and unlearned; for likewiſe to *them* the goſpel gives relief, faſhioning 'em even to the likeneſs of God. That no man but muſt confeſs it is very beneficial to be expert in the ſciences; and that prudence; the ſtudy of the arts; and the beſt diſcipline,—far from hindering, very much facilitate the knowledge of God. That it is a deteſtable calumny to compare chriſtians with wandering impoſtors—*us who* by perpetual expounding the divine oracles, exhort and inſtruct the people to piety unto the great God, and all the golden chain of virtues, its iſſue, and companions;—endeavouring to reſcue men from a doleful diſreliſh, and diſregard of the Beſt of Beings;—from all irregular and brutiſh emotions. That the church is ſo oppoſite to admitting any one haſtily, that ſhe rigorouſly examines thoſe who would become her members. And when proper

perſons

perſons having made a private trial of them, do find 'em ſeriouſly determined for a life of religion, then they are admitted in their due order. We have ſome that are new-entered: others that have evidenced their purpoſe to live chriſtians. And there are governors who inſpect thoſe that have been taken into the congregation; to expel ſuch whoſe behaviour don't correſpond to their profeſſion, and cordially entertain thoſe whoſe words and lives agree.

We deſire all men may be trained up in the word of God; our miniſters profeſſing themſelves debtors to Greeks and Barbarians, both to the wiſe and the unwiſe; that they may ſee an end of their lamentable ignorance, attaining to the fear of the Lord, which is the beginning, and then to his love, which is the conſummation of wiſdom. And as to our ſeducing ſilly women; on the reverſe; we reclaim ſuch from immodeſty, from falling out with their huſbands, and running it on to a ſeparation; and from the wild extravagancies of the theatres and ſpectacles. We openly, not in corners, promiſe an eternity of bliſs to thoſe who govern their lives by the divine law; who place God always before their eyes, and whatever they act, endeavour at his approbation."

Nor were theſe chriſtians more deſpiſed for weakneſs and ignorance, than for their meanneſs

meanneſs and indigence. The public looked upon them as the riff-raff of mankind; ſcarce a perſon of ſignificance to be found in their aſſemblies. "See (ſays the heathen in *Minucius Felix*;) you are a poor, beggarly, hunger-bitten generation, that have neither ſubſtance, dignity, nor character.". This charge was not wholly true, the chriſtians having ſome with them of conſiderable ſtation and quality.

But we'll ſuppoſe it had been the caſe, this was no real diſhonour nor diſſervice to them or their cauſe. "That moſt of us are poor (replies *Octavius* to *Cæcilius*,) is not our detriment: it is our advantage.—The human mind which unbraces by affluence and luxury, acquires a repulſive force by penury and frugality. But how can you call a perſon poor, who in *this world* is hardly neceſſitous, but with reſpect to God abounds, and hath laid up a mountain of wealth in the corruptleſs heavens. The man is needy, who, poſſeſt of much, courts more. Yet you can meet with no one ſo poor as he was born. The birds are ſuſtained without any patrimony; and the beaſts enjoy no intail,—who find paſtures every day. Theſe nevertheleſs are created for our uſe; all which we have true pleaſure in, when we live above them and covet them not. More expedite and happier goes the perſon

ſon to heaven, who is unencumbered by the way with a needleſs weight of riches.

But now the vivacity of dulneſs took ſuch a ſally, that the chriſtians were not only gravely charged with unſerviceableneſs, but alſo with pulling down every calamity upon Rome, and the world. In reply to the firſt, *Tertullian* ſays, "I think I ſhall make you ſee you have overſhot yourſelves here. For don't we live among you, and have the ſame diet, habit, manner, and way of life? You know we are no *Bramins* or *Naked Philoſophers*, that live in woods, baniſhing ourſelves from all civilized life. No; we are better taught by our good God what we owe his creatures, what we owe his adored ſelf *in them*, who are of the ſame nature with us; nor do we ſlight any of his merciful bounties to ſinful man, though are heedful to partake of them with ſoberneſs and temperance. Upon which account, we don't live in the world without your markets, ſhambles, ſhops, ſtables, and other articles of communication. We go to ſea with you, bear arms, till the ground, follow trade, exerciſe traffic—We undergo apprenticeſhips among you, and when maſters expoſe our works to your uſe. It is therefore impoſſible we ſhould be of no ſignificance to your affairs, with which and by which we have our ſubſiſtence: eſpecially, as we labour vigorouſly to pay every man his

his own.—We would not for the world any one ſhould ſuffer by *us*. If there are people who may complain of our inutility, certainly they are the bawds, ruffians, ſellers of poiſon, fortune-tellers, wizards; and to be unprofitable to ſuch is the greateſt ſerviceableneſs."

It can't be diſowned but that ſome of the firſt chriſtians were ſhy of war, and averſe from places of authority and power; but beſides that this was no more than a private opinion, not a deciſion of the church; it aroſe from the heathens clogging thoſe poſts with unlawful conditions, ſuch as ſwearing by the emperor's genius, which claſhed with the chriſtian law. Otherwiſe, when without a force upon conſcience they could, they did not decline it; but liſted themſelves in the army, or diſcharged places of truſt, as muſt be known to any that are at all verſed in eccleſiaſtical hiſtory *.

Thus alſo the chriſtians pleaded "We in this and t'other place adminiſtering the word, are the means of reclaiming many profligate perſons: now here's a great ſervice to ſociety; for it extends not to the preſent age alone, but to all the poſterity which the reclaimed ſtand connected with:

* We find at the end of Juſtin Martyr's firſt apology, that it was out of gratitude for a victory juſt granted the chriſtians *then in the army*, that the emperor Aurelius ſtopt the perſecution by a letter to the ſenate.

with: it draws the ſmiles of heaven upon the abodes of theſe *newly virtuous:* it confeſſedly influences into eternity.

Nay where the goſpel failed of ſo happy an effect, and could not convert to a crucify'd maſter, yet this highly deſirable conſequence followed; that the world learned better leſſons by it, were enlarged in their notions of the moral duties. It refined their underſtandings to a great pitch, furniſhing proper and exalted ſentiments of God and religion. Hence philoſophers in chriſtian times are eaſily diſtinguiſhed from their predeceſſors, by the ſublimity and uſefulneſs of their writings. The ſpirit of the goſpel began to fly abroad, and left ſome tincture in the underſtandings of men, though they were its implacable enemies. And then many formed a familiar acquaintance with the writings of chriſtians, induced by curioſity, or a view to confute. This ſet an edge upon their conception, and infuſed a vaſt elevation of ideas: witneſs the divine morality running through *Seneca*, *Epictetus*, *Antoninus*, *Arrian*, *Plutarch*, *Hierocles*, *Plotinus*. And yet tho' it was ſuch a glaring caſe, how much the world owed to chriſtians, they were pleaſed to repute them the peſts of human ſociety, as complains *Tertullian*; and that for their ſakes vengeance ſo remarkably haunted the empire. "If the city be beſieged, if any

any thing goes wrong in the fields, the garriſons, or iſlands, a clamour riſes; *it is becauſe of the chriſtians.* If the Tiber overflow the walls, if the Nile do not overflow the lands, if the heavens vary from their accuſtomed courſe, if, working by ſecond cauſes, God ſmites the wicked world with peſtilence or famine, the cry grows hot; *away with the chriſtians to the lions*; Adam's unrenewed race thirſtily quaff the blood of the regenerate. Thus *Demetrian*, proconſul of *Afric*, objected to St. *Cyprian*; they might thank the chriſtians, that wars ſo often ſtarted up, dearth and the plague had ſuch wide ſway, and that exceſſive rains overwhelmed the products of the year."

The chriſtians made them a ſhort anſwer: *Firſt*, that the Gentiles would do well to ſeek at home the cauſes of theſe calamities. *Secondly*, for their peculiarity to the times, they deny'd it to be true. "What childiſh talk is all this (ſays the fluent *Tertullian*;) did not miſeries come in a deluge upon the world, without ſparing your imperial Rome, before the reign of *Tiberius*; that is; before the coming of Chriſt? Have not we read of *Hierapolis*, and the iſlands, *Delos*, *Rhodes*, and *Coos*, deſtroyed with many thouſand inhabitants? Does not Plato mention great part of *Aſia* and *Africa* whelmed by the Atlantic ocean? then an earthquake drunk up the Corin-

thian ſea; and again the force of the ocean rent off *Sicily* from *Italy*. Not to aſk, *Where were the chriſtian contemners of your Gods*; but where were *your Gods*, when the flood ſtood deep upon the earth in general? And *Paleſtine* had not yet received the Jewiſh nation, from a Branch of which ſprung the chriſtians; when *Sodom*, and *Gomorrah*, with the adjacent parts, were burnt by angry heaven's ſulphureous ſhower. Upon a compariſon with former viſitations, we ſhall find the afflicting hand of God lighter, ſince chriſtians were in the world. And we can account for it; becauſe innocence now balances the iniquities of the age; and there are many who interceed with heaven."

Euſebius remarks more than once, that while chriſtianity was protected, the affairs of the empire commonly flouriſhed; but when they perſecuted the holy faith, every thing was viſited with calamity; nor could the Pagans retrieve their former proſperity, till tranquility was reſtor'd to Chriſt's followers. *Cyprian* roundly tells the proconſul, their barbarous uſage of the beneficent chriſtians provoked God to lay ſuch afflictions upon them; who honoured not the Maker of the world themſelves, and purſued to death juſt and good perſons that did."

CHAP.

CHAP. IV.

Charges againſt the chriſtians reſpecting their life and manners.

THE attacs we have ſeen upon the reputation of Chriſt's flock, were but ſlight ſkirmiſhes in compariſon of the grand battalia yet to engage; the charge againſt their moral conduct and actions; and it carried no leſs than high treaſon in their aſſembling; inceſt, and promiſcuous mixtures perpetrated by them when met; with the murder of infants and eating the fleſh at their ſacramental feaſts. The particular anſwers to theſe accuſations will come in hereafter. I ſhall now only cite the chriſtians general defence; the ſum of which conſiſted in theſe three things:

Firſt: THEY pleaded the tenor of their lives; which drew another picture than their enemies had painted. Indeed their method of acting extorted the admiration of all. *Clemens of Alexandria* delivers this ſhort account of them: "As the faireſt poſſeſſion, we (ſay they) give our *ſelves* to God, entirely loving him, and reckoning this the buſineſs, the ornament, the ſupport, and joy of our whole lives. We loſe ſelf in the abyſs of God. No man is with us a chriſtian; no man is deemed truly rich,—temperate,—generous,—but

he that is really religious: nor does any one farther bear the image of God, than he ſpeaks, and believes, and acts what is thoroughly juſt and holy. So that this in ſhort is the ſtate of us who profeſs chriſtianity; ſuch as are our deſires, ſuch are our diſcourſes; ſuch as are our diſcourſes, ſuch are our actions; ſuch as are our actions, ſuch are our lives: ſo indefectiv in rectitude is all a chriſtian's life." Indeed *Clemens* here ſpoke an acknowledged truth; for there never were ſuch public enemies to a barren profeſſion, and the cloaking a bad conduct with an outſide of piety, as the primitive chriſtians. "Do any live diſobedient to Chriſt's commands? It is a reſiſtleſs proof they are no chriſtians, let them talk his religion never ſo finely. "For *they* are not meer profeſſors, but ſuch as lead good lives too, that ſhall be ſaved." Which, *Juſtin* declares to the emperors.

Secondly; THEY offered to put themſelves upon the moſt rigorous trial, and called out for the extremeſt puniſhments on their own heads, if they ſhould be convicted of the crimes they were charged with —So beſpeaks their apologiſt; "We ſupplicate you, that theſe matters may be inquired into: and in caſe the chriſtians turn out guilty, God forbid they ſhould be ſcreened; nay may criminals againſt ſo much light be executed more terribly than any.

any. But ſure, as you ſeem ſenſible of the clearneſs of their lives, you will not go on to ordain, that unblameable, nay very laudable perſons ſhall ſuffer ſo horribly, upon meer report and popular clamour?" Yet the adverſary was too diffident of his cauſe, to grant ſuch a juſt demand: and the men who vented moſt venom at theſe holy people, were at the ſame time ſo convinced of their innocence, and their capacity of ſhowing it, they dared not bring them to a fair trial.

So too all in vain, *Tertullian* importunes; "If you are, as you pretend, ſo clear in our abominable wickedneſs, pray let the world ſee it. Treat us upon the footing of other criminals with a fair citation and trial. But is it righteous with you, we ſhould be hurried away to the tribunal, there to be condemned unheard, and no crime proved, but our bearing an innocent name? For 'tis the harmleſs, and (I will tell you,) glorious name of chriſtians brings this whole ſtorm upon us. The public odium is juſtified, and we ſuffer, upon our bare confeſſing ourſelves of the church, without the leaſt examination into the charge. You do not proceed thus againſt any other delinquents; whom it is by no means ſufficient to accuſe, as murderers, prophaners of the gods, inceſtuous perſons, enemies to the public; but you

take the quality of the fact, the place, manner, time, accomplices and acceſſories under examination; and then patiently hear the defendant, and his evidence; that there may be given upon the whole a righteous ſentence. But no ſuch common juſtice is adminiſtered to us; who are dreadfully puniſhed without any inquiſition paſt in the affair." *There was good reaſon the heathens ſhould take this courſe, ſeeing they could really find nothing to condemn theſe people for, but their being chriſtians; all the quarrel was about this appellation: and when there was no guilt to be proved beſides, the odiouſneſs of this was enough to caſt a man.*

Thirdly, The chriſtians appealed for their juſtification to their more ſober enemies; and they as frankly acquitted them, as not chargeable with any heinous offence. *Pliny* junior, being commanded by *Trajan* to give him an account of the chriſtians, ſends word; "That after the ſtricteſt inquiſition by torture, that could be made, he found no more harm in them than this; that they were wont to meet early for their ſolemn devotions, and bind themſelves by the moſt ſacred obligations to commit no wickedneſs, nor any vice: and that their religion was nothing but an untoward and immoderate ſuperſtition." This is the teſtimony that great proconſul, ſo able to inform himſelf, gives concerning them.

After

After him, *Serenus Granianus* writes to the emperor *Adrian*, Trajan's ſucceſſor, ſetting forth, that it was very tyrannical to put any men to death, when no crime was legally proved, meerly to gratify the tumultuous humour of the people." To whom anſwer was made; "That they ſhould not be unjuſtly troubled. If any charge appeared true againſt them, he ſhould puniſh them according to the crime.—But if the proſecution turned out meer ſpite, then to proceed againſt the accuſers as calumniators." *Antoninus Pius*, after *Adrian*, writes to the commons of *Aſia*; "That they did nothing but ſlander the chriſtians; and laid things to their charge they could not prove a tittle of: that thoſe people ſhowed more fortitude in calamity than themſelves, and had greater freedom and more proper confidence towards God: upon which accounts he was reſolved to follow, and further ratify, the determinations of his predeceſſors."

We may hence ſee clearly, how free were believers from that load of guilt the heathen caſt upon 'em. Sneering *Celſus* is told by *Origen*, that God's churches trained by the diſcipline of Chriſt, being compared with human ſocieties of the beſt regulation, *ſhone like lights up and down the world*. The weakeſt in the faith among us (ſays *Origen*,) are truliер enlightened and far better men, than the wiſeſt mem-

bers of your popular aſſemblies." And thus *Minutius Felix* inforces; "We don't meaſure wiſdom by men's habits, but by their minds and tempers; nor dwell great things upon our tongues, but ſparkle in our conduct and Lives. And this is true of us through Chriſt who ſtrengthens us; we really attain to that ſuperiority over the world, your philoſophers panted after, but never could reach unto." *Lactantius* having excellently diſcourſed upon the Gentiles prodigious immoralities, concludes, "But which of theſe things can be charged upon *us*, whoſe whole religion is *to live without ſpot*, and, as far as in us lies, *without blame* on earth. From whence, poor idolaters, ye might gather by the uſe of your reaſon, that piety with the divine influences, ranges on our ſide, but you are in your natural ſtate, at preſent unhappy children of wrath." And *Euſebius* records, that in his time the chriſtian faith had by gravity, ſincerity, modeſty, and holineſs of life, ſo conquered all oppoſers, that none durſt tax it with any of thoſe things, with which blind animoſity uſed to blacken it." What religion (ſays Arnobius) can be more modelled by truth, and better ſubſerve utility; what can be fuller of juſtice and power than this; — which renders men meek, ſteddy, truth-ſpeakers, modeſt, chaſte, charitable, kind, helpful with ſimplicity to all, undiſguſted

diſguſted by the moſt noiſome ſervices." —Indeed the chriſtian doctrine genuinly produces this fruit, when it has poſſeſſion of the heart. But if men depart from the diſcipline of the goſpel, they ceaſe in the eſtimation of the orthodox to be chriſtians.

CHAP. V.

Of the poſitive parts of their religion; and firſt, of their piety exhibited to God.

HAVING ſeen the chriſtians clearing themſelves with ſuch force from aſperſions, we will take a more direct view of their religion, and conſider it, according to St. Paul's diviſion, firſt as to their piety towards God; then, as to the virtues which more immediately concerned themſelves; and laſtly, as to thoſe that directly tended to the benefit of others. Their piety ſhone in two main inſtances; a profound abhorrence of idolatry, and a zealous concern for divine worſhip.

IDOLATRY, the ſin of robbing God of his whole right in his creature, was then the ſin of all the world but the Jews. Now the ſervants of Chriſt reputed a man an idolater, not when he fell down before an image only, but when too he ſo devo-

ted his heart to any created thing, as to exclude God from his rightful ſovereignty there: ſo juſt was their notion of idolatry. We find a vaſt activity in them to aſſert adoration, as his incommunicable honour, to God,—and to refuſe the *appearance* of worſhip to the nobleſt of creatures. Hear *Origen*'s confeſſion on this head "We adore the *only* glorious Lord God; —Obedience unreſerved and commenſurate to life render we *Him*; treading in the ſteps of our moſt bleſſed Maſter, who ſolicited by the devil to adore him, anſwered to his confuſion, *thou ſhalt worſhip the Lord thy God, and Him only ſhalt thou ſerve.* You ſee why we abjure all ſervice to *the princes of the power of the air, the gods of this world:* neither can we ſerve two maſters, *God and mammon.* As for angels, preſident over fruits and ſeaſons and the production of animals; we ſpeak honourably of them, judge 'em happy to be by God intruſted for his rational creatures, but yet *honour not them as we honour the Father*; nor are they capable of requiring it, thoſe bleſſed angels who with pleaſure regard our juſt love and eſteem of them, would utterly deteſt us if we gave 'em divine glory." When *Celſus* ſmartly preſs'd him to ſacrifice to dæmons, this great good man repulſed the propoſal with extreme averſation; "Away (ſays he) with this counſel of *Celſus*, who is not to

be

be at all regarded in this matter: to God alone be paid worſhip, rendered acceptable by his ſon alone." Indeed the worſhip of angels pretty early crept into ſome parts of the church, but was always diſavowed by the body of chriſtians, and at laſt publicly and flatly condemned by the *Laodicean* council; "It is not lawful (ſays the 35th canon of that council) for chriſtians to leave the church of God and invocate angels: if therefore any be found devoting himſelf to this private idolatry, let him be accurſed; foraſmuch as he has deſerted the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, and has delivered up himſelf to idol-worſhip." Here is in clear expreſſion the ſolemn ſenſe of the church of God.

And they were as peremptory in denying ſuch honours to martyrs and departed ſaints. Martyrs to be-ſure were great objects of veneration to them, as who had cemented the chriſtian building with their blood; but a celebrated record will ſhew how far they were from putting theſe in the place of God. The church of *Smyrna* writes to the church of *Pontus*, that after the illuſtrious *Polycarp* was martyr'd, ſeveral chriſtians try'd to obtain the body(*a*), that they might give it a decent burial; but were defeated by ſome Jews, who got fug-

(*a*) See *Ech. Eccleſiaſtical Hiſtory*, Page 493. There is a ſmall miſtake here in Dr. *Cave*.

ſuggeſted to the proconſul, that if he granted their ſuit, the chriſtians going off from their crucified maſter, might thenceforth worſhip *Polycarp*." Here the church adds: "A ſilly thought, which only groſs ignorance of the caſe of chriſtians could have ſpawned. For where can we find a ſufficient atonement for the infinite demerit of ſin, where an adequate Object of adoration but in Jeſus Chriſt, one Being *(b)* with God the Father? The martyrs deſerve and have our affection, for that they were our Lord's love-inflamed followers, whoſe companions in attendance unto death, we are ambitious to be." This was the unadulterate doctrine of the church then, and ſo held for ſome centuries, even to the age of St. *Auſtin*, who in expreſs words, and frequently, aſſerts, that the honour of love, reſpect, and imitation, —— yet not of religious invocation, is due to departed ſaints, to martyrs, and angels."

Strongly tinctured with ſuch principles, and under this diſcipline nurtured, it is no wonder they choſe to do and ſuffer any thing, rather than make the leaſt advance to idol-worſhip. Baniſhment and confiſcation were chearfully ſuſtained upon this account. *Caldonius* tells *Cyprian* of one *Bona*, who being dragged by her huſband to ſacrifice, —— as they guided her hand

(*b*) Τὸ ὁμ.

hand to the idolatrous performance,—proteſted it was not ſhe, but they did it; and thereupon was ſent into baniſhment. They freely reſigned the higheſt ſtations, rather than by idolatry diſpleaſe their gracious God, and ſtrike a ſting of mortal ſorrow into their conſciences. *Euſebius* gives us not a few examples of death ſooner than idolatry, incurred. Indeed the teſt of the times was, *ſacrifice or die*. *Phileas* writes of the martyrdoms at *Alexandria* to his flock: "That after ſumleſs and unheard-of tortures endured, the choice was propoſed: Sacrifice and be releaſed, or refuſe and loſe your heads: Upon which, the ſufferers to *a woman* embraced death without demur. And for ſuch refuſal, a city in *Phrygia* was burned with all its inhabitants.

We ſee there could not be a more abſurd injuſtice than to charge the chriſtians with idolatry. The falſe notion of their worſhipping the ſun partly aroſe from their turning towards the eaſt, when they bowed to their *Righteous Sun with healing Wings*; partly from the ſolemnities of their religion held on the day dedicated to the ſun; which made ſome Gentiles ſincerely believe they adored that luminary. They were next reviled as worſhippers of crucifixes.——But this charge was deſtitute of any plauſible foundation. No: (ſays *Octavius*) you have the wooden gods all to your-

yourſelves. As for crucifixes, we neither adore, nor in general deſire them. The chriſtians ſo magnifying their crucified Maſter, probably gave occaſion to this. But the adoration of two timbers laid acroſs, was a ſin and folly to which theſe times were the greateſt ſtrangers.

CHAP. VI.

Of churches and places of public worſhip.

AND the primitive believers were juſt as obſervant of the true, as zealous againſt idolatrous worſhip: which will very convincingly appear, if we ſurvey the care they exerciſed about the place, time, perſons, and both matter and manner of the adoration they paid to God. In the *ſacred ſtory* we find more than probable ſootſteps of appropriate places for their ſolemn meetings. Of this nature was that *upper room*, where the apoſtles and diſciples (after the reſurrection) retired, as to a place commonly known and ſet apart for that uſe; there by faſting and prayer to make choice of a new apoſtle. It was ſuppoſed by a moſt ancient tradition, to have been the ſame chamber in which our Lord the night before his death, celebrated the paſſover

ſover with his diſciples, and inſtituted the holy ſacrament. Such an one, if not that very room, was the *one place* where all were unanimouſly aſſembled on the day of pentecoſt, when the Holy Ghoſt deſcended in a viſible form upon them. The multitude (foreigners of every nation under heaven) came readily to the ſpot on the firſt ſurprizing report; which could not have arrived, if it had not been a place of notoriety, where the chriſtians met.

And very learned men with great propriety underſtand Acts ii. 46. — *They continued daily with one accord in the temple: And breaking bread* [κατ οἴκους] not as we render it, from houſe to houſe, but *at home* (as it is in the margin: —— *in the houſe,) they ét their meat with gladneſs and ſingleneſs of heart.* Which means: —— After they had performed their daily devotions in the temple at the hour of prayer, they came home to this upper room to celebrate the Lord's ſupper, and afterwards went to their ordinary meals.

Thus things ſtood in the apoſtles time. For *ſucceeding ages*; we find the chriſtians had their fixed places of worſhip, eſpecially in the ſecond century; as, had we no other evidence, might be made good from the teſtimony of *Lucian* in *Trajan*'s reign; who expreſsly mentions *that houſe* or room, in which the chriſtians

tians met to ſerve God. And *Clemens* (in his famous epiſtle to the *Corinthians,*) aſſures us, Chriſt not only appointed the times when, and the perſons by whom, but alſo the places where, He would be ſolemnly worſhiped. And *Juſtin Martyr* clearly reports, that on *Sunday* all chriſtians (whether in city or country,) aſſembled for Worſhip in one place; no doubt, a ſettled place.

The churches of the chriſtians began to riſe apace, as the black clouds diſappeared from their horizon, under *Valerian*, *Claudius*, *Aurelian*, and ſome other Emperors. Of which halcyon days *Euſebius* tells us: That the biſhops found the moſt cordial reſpect and kindneſs, both from people and governours." And adds, "But who ſhall count the multitudes that daily flocked to the faith of Chriſt; the many congregations in every city; thoſe famous meetings of theirs in their oratories or places of public prayer, ſo numerous, that not accommodated, or content, with the old buildings, they erected from the very foundations more beautiful, and capacious ſtructures in every city?" This was ſeveral years before the times of *Conſtantine*: yet even *they* had their churches of ancient ſtanding.

Thus from the very infancy of the goſpel, chriſtians always had dedicate places of worſhip. For the form of their churches,

churches, it was uſually oblong: to imitate (ſay ſome) the form of a ſhip, a common emblem by which the church was held forth:——cautioning us how we ſteer upon the toſſing waves of this world: alſo ſuggeſting, that out of the church is no ſafe paſſage to heaven; the country from which God deſcended to lift men up to.

I ſhall not undertake to deſcribe the exact ſhape, and the ſeveral parts and dimenſions of their churches (which ſomewhat varied according to different times and ages,) but briefly delineate ſuch as were commoneſt, and moſt remarkable. At the entrance of their church was a porch, in greater buildings of ſomething larger capacity. Here ſtood the loweſt order of penitents, begging the prayers of the faithful as they went in. For the church itſelf: it uſually conſiſted of three parts: the firſt was the *narthex*, that part of the building next the great door by which they entered. In the outſet of it ſtood the catechumens, or learners of chriſtianity: in the middle — the *energumeni*, or thoſe who were poſſeſſed by dæmons:—and in this part alſo ſtood the font; and towards the upper end was the place of hearers, who were one of the ranks of penitents. The ſecond part contained the middle, or main body of the church (called by the Romans *navis*, whence our term, the nave of the church; in which the

the faithful aſſembled for celebration of divine ſervice; where the men and women had diſtinct apartments. In this part of the church, next its entry, ſtood the claſs of penitents who were called *doppers* (ὑποπίπτοντες,) becauſe at their going out they fell on their knees before the biſhop, who laid his hands upon them. Next to them was the reading-deſk, whence the ſcripture was read and preached to the people. Above that—were the faithful, the higheſt order of the people, and who alone communicated at the Lord's table. The third part was ſeparated from the reſt of the church by rails called *cancelli*, whence the Engliſh word, *chancel*: into this part none might come but ſuch as were in holy orders. At the upper end of the chancel was the throne of the biſhop, on both ſides of which were the ſeats of the preſbyters. The biſhop's throne was raiſed a conſiderable hight above the ground, and thence he generally delivered his diſcourſes to the people. Adjoining to the chancel, probably on the north ſide, was the diaconicon, called ſo becauſe peculiarly committed to the deacon of the place. It was in the nature of our veſtries; in which the plate, veſſels, and veſtments belonging to the church, and other things appropriate to hallowed uſes, were laid up. On the other ſide of the chancel was the prothesis, or place where preparations were made for the

the ſacrament; where they ſet down the offerings, and what remained of the ſacramental elements, till they were decently diſpoſed of.

The firſt uſe of ſtatues and pictures in public churches was meerly hiſtorical, which after-ages abuſed to ſuperſtition and idolatry. The leader of them, that we diſcover upon good authority, was no older than the time of *Epiphanius*, and then met with no very welcome entertainment; as appears from that excellent prelate's own epiſtle, tranſlated by St. *Hierom*: "Coming (ſays he) to *Anablatha*, a village in *Paleſtine*, and going into a church to pray, I ſpy'd a curtain hanging over a door, on which Chriſt, or ſome ſaint was pourtrayed. But when I ſaw the image of a man hanging up in the church, contrary to holy ſcripture, — with great indignation I preſently rent it, admoniſhing the guardian of the church to uſe it for a winding ſheet in ſome poor man's interment. At which, when they were a little troubled, and ſaid, It was but juſt, ſince I had torn that curtain, I ſhould change it, and give them another; I promiſed them I would; and now have ſent the beſt I could get, and pray deſire their acceptance of it: at the ſame time giving command, that for the future, no ſuch ornaments (which are utterly repugnant to our religion) may be diſplayed in the church of Chriſt. It is

your

your eſpecial duty, beloved brother, to remove whatever gives ſcandal, and is unworthy of a chriſtian congregation, and which endangers thoſe committed to your charge." This was wrote to *John* biſhop of *Jeruſalem*, in whoſe dioceſe the thing paſſed. The caſe is weightier, by how much the higher eſteem *Epiphanius* (then biſhop of *Salamine* in *Cyprus*,) for his virtuous age and excellent learning bore in the church of God.

For a long while they had no other public incomes, than either what aroſe from contributions at their uſual aſſemblies, every one after his ability putting into a common ſtock; or what proceeded from offerings out of the improvement of their lands; the apoſtolic canons providing, that their firſt fruits ſhould be partly preſented in the church, partly ſent home to the biſhops and preſbyters. The care of all was committed to the prelate: "For who (ſay the authors of the canons) is fitter to be intruſted with the revenues of the church, than one already intruſted with mens ſouls?" This proviſion was employed in the maintenance of the clergy, the relief of the poor, or whatever neceſſities of the church. As chriſtianity increaſed, and times mended, they came to poſſeſs fixed revenues; houſes and lands being ſettled upon them. Such it is certain they had even during the perſecu-

tions

tions; ſince we find an ordinance of *Conſtantine* and *Licinius*, wherein giving liberty of religion to chriſtians, and reſtoring the churches raviſhed from them, they add: "And becauſe the chriſtians had not only aſſembling-places, but are known alſo to have held other poſſeſſions, which were no property of any ſingle perſon, but belonged to the whole body; all theſe we command to be immediately given back to every ſociety and community of them".

CAAP. VII.

Of the Lord's-Day, and the faſts and feſtivals of the ancient church.

IN all ages and nations men have by a dictate of nature been guided to fix upon ſome ſeaſons, on which they met for the public offices of religion. But the feſtivals of the *Gentiles* are foreign to my deſign. For the ancient chriſtians: they ever had their ſtated ſeaſons of worſhip, and the Lord's-Day challenges the precedency of them all: Sometimes (eſpecially by *Juſtin Martyr* and *Tertullian*) called Sunday, as happening on the day conſecrated to the ſun: and the fathers commonly uſed that

that word in their apologies, becauſe beſt known to the heathen governours. But the proper name was the *Lord's-Day*, as it is ſtyl'd by St. *John* himſelf: it being that day of the week on which our Lord made his triumphant return from the grave. This, *Juſtin Martyr* aſſures us, was the true original of the title. "Upon ſunday (ſays he) all of us aſſemble for the ſervice of religion; as now Chriſt reſted after our redemption, a work compleated upon the moſt happy day of his reſurrection." Therefore we may obſerve all through the ſacred hiſtory, that from the reſuſcitation of the Lord, the apoſtles and primitive chriſtians met particularly on the firſt day of the week. This was more than other times a ſacred ſeaſon of aſſembling. THEN were they together, when Jeſus firſt reviſited 'em; and ſo the week after. On this day they were aſſembled, when the Holy Ghoſt kindled their active tongues with ſacred fire; and *Peter* preached that powerful ſermon,——He with his fellow-labourers, converting and baptizing three thouſand ſouls. St. *Paul* took his ſolemn leave at *Troas* on the firſt day of the week, when the diſciples were met to recruit their ſouls with the *holy bread*; and giving directions to the church of *Corinth* concerning charitable contributions, he adviſes the making up their quotas on that ſame day, plainly having his eye upon the religious aſſemblies

in each week. It is with much probability thought to have been called *Quadrageſima*, not becauſe it is a faſt of forty days, but of ſo many hours; begun about twelve on Friday (the time of our Saviour's falling under the power of death) and continued on to Sunday morning, the time of His riſing from the dead. Afterwards it was enlarged to a longer ſpace;—more days;—then weeks;—— till it came to three; and at laſt to ſix, or ſeven weeks.

But with whatever care they kept the preceeding parts, they certainly obſerved the cloſe of it with a mighty ſtrictneſs and auſterity; I mean the week immediately before Eaſter. *This* was conſecrated to more peculiar acts of prayer, abſtinence, and devotion: and whereas in the other parts of Lent they ended their faſt in the evening, in this they extended it to the cockcrowing, or firſt glimpſe of morning. It was the *great* (or *holy*) week; ſo termed (ſays *Chryſoſtom*,) becauſe in this week truly great and good things were purchaſed for us: within which ſpace death was conquered, the curſe deſtroyed, ſatan's tyranny overthrown and diſſolved, his inſtruments ſcatterred, heaven opened, angels rejoiced, the partition-wall broken down and God and man reconciled. For theſe things we may well call it the grand week: for this cauſe men faſt, and watch, and pray, and do alms, to attach the greater honour to it.

aſſemblies then held. And *Juſtin Martyr*, we have ſeen, aſſerts it to have been the practice in after-ages.

The ancient chriſtians had two ſorts of ſolemn faſts, weekly and annual. The weekly were Wedneſday and Friday; becauſe on Wedneſday our Lord was betrayed,—on Friday crucified. *Epiphanius* traces back this cuſtom to the apoſtles, and teſtifies thoſe daies were ever ſolemnized as faſts throughout the world. By an alluſion to *keeping guard*, they called them their *ſtations*, as *Tertullian* remarks; and they uſually laſted till three in the afternoon; at which time having ended their proper devotions, they received the ſacrament, and went home; whence that writer ſtyles 'em the *half-faſts of ſtations* [ſtationum ſemijejunia.] The remains of theſe primitive ſtations are yet obſerved in our church; which by her fifteenth canon has ordained, *that though Wedneſdays and Fridays are not holy days, yet weekly upon thoſe times, miniſter and people ſhall reſort to church at the accuſtomed hours of prayer.*

Their annual faſt was that of Lent, in preparation to the feſtival of the reſurrection: this was very ancient. From the firſt age of the church, 'twas the cuſtom to faſt before Eaſter; but the length of it was variouſly kept in different times and places: ſome faſting ſo many days, others ſo many weeks, and ſome ſo many days

in

it. The emperors themſelves, for the manifeſtation of their reverence to this ſeaſon, commanding all ſuits and proceſſes at law to ceaſe, tribunal-doors to be ſhut up,——and to diſcharge priſoners; imitating their moſt glorious Lord herein, who by his death freed us at this time from the priſon and chains of ſin. That beſides the weekly returns of the Lord's-Day, there was obſerved in and from the apoſtolic age, an anniverſary memorial of Chriſt's Reſurrection, no man can doubt, that has an inſight into the affairs of the church.

Nazianzen calls it the holy and famous paſſover; a day which is the queen of glorious days; feſtival of feſtivals; that exceeds all others, as the ſun's blaze obſcures the other ſtars: a time ſignalized by works of mercy and charity; every one contending to adminiſter liberally to the poor; a duty (as one of the ancients obſerves) very ſuitable to that gracious ſeaſon.—For what more fit than that poor petitioners ſhould from *us* have cauſe to rejoice, when we commemorate the high pellucid fountain of all our mercies, our ineſtimable mercies? Therefore no ſooner did the morning of this day appear, but *Conſtantine* uſed to riſe, and in imitation of the loving kindneſs of *our bleſſed Saviour, our dear Lord*, to beſtow the richeſt and moſt noble gifts, and to diffuſe the influences of his bounty over all parts of his empire.

The next conſiderable feaſt in thoſe heavenly times, was that of *Whitſunday*, or *Pentecoſt*; a feaſt kept with great eminence among the Jews, in memory of the law then delivered on mount *Sinai*,—and for the gathering in their harveſt; but of far higher note among chriſtians, for the deſcent of the Holy Spirit, at that time, Who beſtowed his amazing gifts on the church. According to the import of *Pentecoſt*, it was obſerved by them with reſpect to *Eaſter*, as by the Jews in relation to their paſſover, fifty days after it; reckoning from the ſecond of that feſtival. Some think it commenced from the riſe of chriſtianity, not only for reaſon the apoſtles and church were met on this day, but becauſe St. Paul ſo haſtened to be at Jeruſalem by that time, which they underſtand of his deſire to celebrate *Pentecoſt* in that city, as a chriſtian feſtival. It took the name of *Whitſunday*, as one of the ſtated ſeaſons (*Eaſter* being the other) for baptiſm in the ancient church; the perſons admitted to which, put on white garments, in token of that innocent and ſhining life they had now engaged in. We may remark in the writers of thoſe ages, that the fifty days between *Eaſter* and *Whitſunday*, go often under the word *Pentecoſt*, and were all in a manner accounted *feſtival*. During all the time baptiſm was conferred, all faſts were deemed unlawful,

unlawful, they prayed ſtanding, as on every Lord's day.

Epiphany comes next, a term uſed promiſcuouſly of old, either for *the Nativity-feaſt*, or for *the manifeſtation of God to the Gentiles*, when Chriſt was worſhipped by the magi. The nativity, and the epiphany, afterwards became diſtinct titles. For its antiquity: the firſt trace I find of it is in the ſecond century; when 'tis mentioned by *Theophilus* biſhop of *Cæſarea*, about the time of the emperor *Commodus*. There's a doleful inſtance of its being held before *Conſtantine*; for while the perſecution raged under *Diocletian*, who then kept his court at *Nicomedia*, the emperor, among other barbarous deeds, finding the chriſtians all aſſembled to celebrate the nativity, commanded the church-doors to be ſhut, and fire ſet to the magnificent edifice: ſo that the whole was quickly reduced to aſhes.

There was a ſort of feſtivals too in commemoration of the martyrs. Once a year met the primitive church at the *graves of martyrs:* there they ſolemnly recited their ſufferings and victories, extolled their compleat virtues, bleſſed God for ſuch pious examples, for their holy lives, and moſt deſirable deaths. Theſe annual ſolemnities were ſtyled *the memorials of the martyrs*. *Martyrum memoriæ* is a title mentioned by *Cyprian*, but certainly much older

than his time: indeed when this uſage was taken up in the church, is not ſo exactly known. The firſt of theſe upon record is the feſtival of *Polycarp*; whoſe martyrdom *Euſebius* places under the third perſecution in the year 168.—His own church of *Smyrna* writing his ſufferings to that of *Philomelium*, profeſs they would aſſemble on the ſpot where the thing paſſed, and celebrate the birth-day of his martyrdom with great feſtivity." The word *birth day* is obſervable on this occaſion: but ſo the primitive chriſtians uſed to call the ſeaſons of their departure hence, looking upon them as the true times of their nativity, in which they were freed from this valley of tears, theſe regions of death, and born anew to an endleſs life, ſtill mounting higher and higher in felicity.

CHAP. VIII.

Concerning the conſtituent parts of the church; both people, and miniſters.

THE perſons that compoſed their religious aſſemblies, were either the body of the people, undiſtinguiſht by rank in life, or thoſe who were ſeparated to the public miniſtrations of religion. For the body of the people:—as chriſtianity

nity got firſt admiſſion, generally, in great towns, ſo all the believers in thoſe places aſſembled themſelves;—the chriſtians of neighbouring villages reſorting to the ſame place at times of public worſhip. But Converts multiplying, the aſſemblies could not be managed with conveniency, and therefore they divided into ſeparate congregations. Theſe had their paſtors ſet over them; who were under the ſuperintendency of the biſhop. And as the church was able to form and eſtabliſh its diſcipline, the people began to be ſorted into ſeveral claſſes; which had proper ſtations in the church, and gradual admiſſion to the ſeveral parts of public worſhip. The firſt were the catechumens; and of theſe were two ſorts; ſuch as having been of conſiderable ſtanding, were ripe for baptiſm; who might ſtay not only the reading the ſcriptures, but to the laſt part of the firſt ſervice: and others *leſs incorporated*, who ranged with the hearers, and, after the reading, departed. Theſe were looked upon as heathens,—to be inſtructed in the grounds of religion; and as their capacities advanced, the chriſtian principles were delivered to them: the plainer opened the mind for the more difficult.

Next were the penitents; perſons unfit for incorporation, or ſuch as lay under the cenſures of the church, and were by degrees to obtain abſolution. There were ſe-

veral ranks of theſe; four eſpecially are mentioned by St. *Gregory* of *Neocæſarea*, who lived about the year 250. Firſt ſtood thoſe that wept and lamented: rather *candidates* to be received among the penitents, than properly *ſuch*. They commonly placed themſelves in a dingy habit at the church porch, and with brimful eyes importuned the faithful for their prayers, as they went in. The ſecond mourning perſons were *the hearers*. admitted to attend within the church till the ſcriptures were read and expounded. Their ſtation was at the upper end of the narthex, and they went away with the catechumens.

The third claſs was of *the proſtrate*; for theſe after ſermon ſunk to the ground before the biſhop, who with the congregation, falling down and making confeſſion in their favour, afterwards raiſed them and laid his hands upon 'em. Theſe ſtood next the reading-pew, and left the church alſo with the catechumens. The fourth and laſt claſs were *the Conſiſtentes*; who ſtayed with the congregation after the others were gone; joined in prayer and ſinging (but might not communicate) with the faithful. Theſe after due time were admitted into the order of communicants.

Perſons having fully paſſed through the ſtate of the catechumens, commenced candidates of baptiſm, and preſenting their names

names to the biſhop, with humble reverence, implored admittance into the church: their title was that of *Appetentes*, from their ſuing for the grace of God conferred in baptiſm. Laſt were the *Faithful*, who having been baptized and confirmed, were received to the participation of the Lord's ſupper, the higheſt and moſt venerable myſtery of the chriſtian religion.

Such was the ſtate of the people. We ſhall next inquire what officers were appointed in the church; as no body of men can ſubſiſt for any time without perſons to ſteer its affairs, and attend on public miniſtrations. The clergy of the chriſtian church (taking it within the firſt four hundred years) conſiſted of two ſorts of perſons; thoſe who were conſecrated to the immediate acts of divine worſhip; and others deſtinated to the more mean and common ſervices of the houſe of God. Of the firſt ſort were biſhops, preſbyters, and deacons.

The principal officer of the church was the preſident or biſhop, uſually choſen out of the preſbyters. A biſhop's office was to inſtruct the people, adminiſter the ſacraments, abſolve penitents, excommunicate the irreclaimable, preſide in the aſſemblies of the clergy, ordain inferior church-officers, call them to an account, inforce the obſervance of eccleſiaſtical

laws, and to inſtitute ſuch indifferent rites as helped the decent adminiſtration of his church: according to the denotation of his name, he was a watchman and head-ſteward in the family of God: upon which accounts, he was obliged to inſpect and provide for the people intruſted with him. Now on the multiplying of country churches, it was needful to take in an order of *ſub-biſhops* [*Chorepiſcopi*;] whoſe duty it was to ſuperintend the churches in the country, that lay more remote from the epiſcopal ſee. Theſe *biſhop's deputies* were choſen out of the moſt ſerious and qualified men. They might be preſent at ſynods and councils (to many of which we find their ſubſcriptions,) and had power to give *letters of peace*; by which the prelate of one dioceſe uſed to recommend any of his clergy to the preſident of another; that ſo a fair underſtanding and correſpondence might be maintained between them.

The next office to biſhops was that of preſbyters; to whom it belonged to preach to the people, to adminiſter baptiſm, to conſecrate the euchariſt, and aſſiſt the prelate both in public miniſtrations and in diſpatching the affairs of the church. In truth, the preſbyters of every great city made a kind of eccleſiaſtical ſenate, whoſe counſel and influence the biſhop uſed in ruling the church he ſuperintended. But though

though the preſbyters had by their ordination, a power to adminiſter holy things, yet they did not, after the church was ſettled, uſually exerciſe this power in any dioceſe, but by an eſpecial licence from the biſhop; much leſs take upon them to preach in his preſence. This was conſtantly kept up in the churches of *Afric*, until the Time of *Valerius*, St. *Auguſtin*'s predeceſſor; who being a *Greek*, and by his ſmall ſkill in the Latin language, unable to preach to the edification of his people, admitted the great *Auſtin* (whom he had lately ordained preſbyter) to preach before him.

After theſe officers came the *deacons*. The buſineſs of their place appears in their primitive election, the apoſtles ſeparating them to *ſerve tables*; take charge of and attend upon thoſe daily proviſions made for indigent chriſtians: but for certain it implies too, their being appointed to a peculiar waiting at the Lord's table. Indeed 'twas the chriſtian cuſtom then, to meet every day at the holy ſupper, where offerings were preſented for the poor, and when both rich and poor took a meal together. It belonged therefore naturally to the deacon to wait at the holy table; accordingly when the elements were conſecrated by the biſhop or preſbyter, he carried them about to the people. Beſides this, it was not unuſual for them to

preach and baptize; and they were employed in many parts of the public ſervice, particularly in directing the motions of the congregation.

Sub-deacons were to be aſſiſtant to the deacon, as the deacon to the preſbyter, and he to the biſhop. One great part of their work was to wait at the church-doors in time of worſhip, uſher in and convey out the ſeveral orders of catechumens and penitents, that no one might tranſgreſs his proper rank, nor any confuſion or diſorder ariſe. When this officer was taken in, I can't diſcover; but he is mentioned in an epiſtle of the Roman clergy to thoſe of *Carthage* —— about the retirement of St. *Cyprian*, and very often in *Cyprian*'s own epiſtles: where he alſo ſpeaks of an *Acolythus*. His office is not certain. By ſome 'tis ſaid, as the word ſeems to ſignify, that he followed the biſhop in quality of an honourable attendant, ready at hand to adminiſter, and a witneſs of his unblameable and becoming converſation. By others he is recorded to have been a taper-bearer, to carry the lights ſet up at reading the goſpel. And *Cyprian* mentions another ſtill, called the *Exorciſt*; who attended the catechumens, and energumeni, or demoniacs; to pray over them in a form for the occaſion; this was done in the name of the whole church, the people at the ſame time praying within: by which means the poſſeſt

poſſeſt were delivered from the tyranny of the evil ſpirit.

The ſame learned and holy biſhop frequently ſpeaks too of the *Lector*. This perſon read the portions of holy ſcripture for the ſervice of the day. Which office the unhappy *Julian*, when a young ſtudent at *Nicomedia*, took upon him; yet for nothing but to blind his couſin *Conſtantius*, who began to ſuſpect him of an inclination to paganiſm,—which he openly revolted to afterwards, and became a bitter enemy of the chriſtians, making a perverſe uſe of thoſe ſcriptures he had once privately ſtudied, and pronounced in public. I don't know whether it may be worth while to take notice of the *Oſtiarii* or doorkeepers, anſwering to the Nethinims in the temple-ſervice.

They were all ſet apart to their offices by ſolemn prayer and impoſition of hands: only it was twice done in ordination; one time by way of conſecration, and the other by way of bleſſing: this was the proper manner of ordaining biſhops, preſbyters, and deacons. All orders under the biſhop were ordained by the biſhop; the prelate himſelf by all the prelates of the province; who were wont to aſſemble, if conveniencies would permit: otherwiſe two might canonically perform the election,—the reſt by letter ſignifying their conſent. However; they were ſometimes choſen

choſen by the general ſuffrage of the people, as was *Cyprian*, that excellent peacemaker in the church.

At all ordinations, eſpecially of ſuperior officers, the people of that place were always preſent, and confirmed the action by their approbation. To this end; the biſhop before every ordination, publiſhed the names of thoſe who were to be dignified, that any one might oppoſe, if there was a material objection. So the unworthy candidate was diſcovered, and the ordination became legitimate and ſatisfactory, having had the unanimous ſuffrage of the people.

We meet in ancient writings with very frequent mention of female-officers, called *Deaconeſſes*, who were employed in many ſervices of religion. Their original was of equal ſtanding with the infancy of the church. We know *Phœbe* was one in the church of *Cenchris*, ſpoken of by St. *Paul:* ſuch alſo were the two maid-ſervants *Pliny* reported to *Trajan:* and ſuch was the famous *Olympias* in the church of *Conſtantinople*;— to mention no more. They were either widows, and then not to be taken to the church-employment under threeſcore, as St. *Paul* ordered; or elſe virgins, who having been educated with a view thereto, and given teſtimony of a ſober and chaſte converſation, were ſet apart at forty. The miniſtry of deaconeſſes conſiſted in ſuch offices

offices as theſe; to attend upon their own ſex at times of worſhip; but eſpecially at the adminiſtration of baptiſm. Sometimes they were uſed even in introducing of women to the Chriſtian Faith, and preparing them for baptiſm. On other occaſions, in viſiting and attending upon ſick women; in conveying meſſages, counſels, conſolations, relief [eſpecially in perſecutions, when 'twas dangerous for men-officers] to the martyrs and them that were in priſon. Theſe excellent women *Libanius*, no doubt, ſpeaks of as amongſt the chriſtians,—ſo ready to be employed in all offices of humanity.

Perſons being thus ſeparated to holy offiices, the chriſtians of thoſe days diſcovered no leſs piety in the mighty reverence and reſpect, which they paid to them. Biſhops and miniſters were regarded as the common fathers of chriſtians, honoured, loved, obeyed: and to whom they repaired for council and direction in all caſes of importance. From ſeveral paſſages in *Tertullian* it is plain, that none could lawfully marry, before they adviſed with the biſhop and clergy of the church, and had obtained their leave. No reſpect was thought great enough for 'em: they uſed to kiſs their hands, to embrace their feet; and as on their leaving, ſo on their returning home, or indeed on their coming to any place,—to wait upon them, and either

ther receive or diſmiſs them with an applauſive confluence of the people.

CHAP. IX.

Of their worſhip, both private and public.

UNDER the notion of worſhip I comprehend all the duties of piety reſpecting God. Their private offices of worſhip were of two ſorts, either ſolemn and ſtated, in which the whole family joined; or ſuch as perſons executed alone, at leaſt did not confine themſelves to times about. For the firſt, which are properly family-duties: they were uſually performed in this manner: at their riſing, the family met, and betook themſelves to prayer; to praiſe God for the protection and refreſhment of the night, and requeſt grace and bleſſing for the inſtant day. This was done by the maſter of the houſe, unleſs there was a miniſter preſent.

That they had ſet times for prayer, the third, ſixth, and ninth hour, appears from *Cyprian*, *Clemens Alexandrinus*, and others. The firſt began at ſix in the morning. — They borrowed it from the Jews, who divided the day into four great hours, from ſix to ſix. The ſecond was at nine; — and

and then the apoſtles and diſciples were met, when the Holy Ghoſt deſcended and ſat upon them. The ſixth was at twelve; which hour held till three; and at this time *Peter* went to the houſe-top to pray. The ninth hour was from three to ſix in the afternoon; and now *Peter* and *John* repaired to the temple, *it being the ninth hour of prayer.* This diviſion was kept up by the chriſtians of ſucceeding times, tho' whether punctually in their family-devotions, I am not able to affirm. About noon, before going to dinner, ſome portions of ſcripture were read; and the meat being upon table, a bleſſing was in a due ſtrain of dependence ſupplicated. So religious was the good *Theodoſius junior* (emperor) herein,—that he never took any refreſhment, not ſo much as a fig, before he made acknowledgment to the fountain of all benefits. A practice juſtly extolled by *Clemens Alexandrinus*; it being decent and juſt to praiſe God, while partaking of his creatures. *Chryſoſtom* begs men to be careful to teach their wives hymns of thankſgiving, which they ſhall uſe even at their ordinary work, but eſpecially at meals, ſuch divine ſongs being an incomparable antidote againſt temptations. For (continues he) as ſatan has never greater advantage againſt us than at our tables, either from our intemperance, eaſe, or immoderate mirth, let us before the repaſt,

and

and in its intervals, fortify ourſelves with pſalms;—and riſing from table with our wives and children, we ſhould again ſing hymns to God." Thus the great preacher *Chryſoſtom*.—At meals too they moſtly had the ſcriptures read to 'em. They finiſhed this ſeaſon with prayer, returning moſt lowly thanks for their preſent recruit, and beſeeching a continuance of the divine bounty, eſpecially to their ſouls.

But added to theſe devotions (in which all the family briſkly concurred;) the chriſtians had a care upon their ſpirits, when alone, to ſpend all the time they could, in devout petition. Moſt aſſiduous were they to pray. *Euſebius* reports of St. *James the Juſt*, that he would go by himſelf every day into the church, and there kneeling upon the pavement, ſo long poured out his prayers to God, that his knees grew at length as hard as a camel's.

Their next concern was, moſt carefully to peruſe the ſcripture,—becoming mighty in the divine oracles. In this ſtudy theſe *chriſtians indeed* ſtrenuouſly beſtirred themſelves: thinking they never could enough underſtand, enough tranſcribe them into their memories and hearts. *That younger Theodoſius* riſing early every morning, interchangeably, with his ſiſters, ſung praiſeful poetry to God, and could exactly repeat the holy ſcriptures in any part of them. He diſcourſed out of the ſame

with

with the biſhops that were at court, as readily as if he had been an old biſhop himſelf.

This was the diſcipline in which the members of Chriſt were trained in thoſe days. Religion was implanted in them betimes, which flouriſhed delightfully, and mixt its pleaſant ſhoots with their ordinary labours, and even their recreations; inſomuch; that perſons the moſt rude and illiterate,—inſtead of profane or wanton ſongs, which vitiate the minds of wretched men;—*the Devil's compoſure*, as *Chryſoſtom* calls them,—uſed nothing but ſpiritual and divine hymns: ſo that, as *Jerom* relates of the place where he lived, you coudn't go into the field but you might hear the plowman at his Hallelujahs, the mower at his hymns, and the vinedreſſer ſinging David's pſalms. Thus they behaved, when left to themſelves.

At their coming together, they begun with prayer. This was followed with reading both in the Old and New Teſtament. About this part of the ſervice, they ſung hymns; a conſiderable portion of the ſolemnity. Here the whole congregation joined in exalting God. In after-times the cuſtom changed to chaunting, in which they anſwered one another; —introduced, we are told, by *Flavianus* and *Diodorus* in the church of *Antioch*, under *Conſtantine:* But, if we may believe *Socrates*,

tes, ſome hundreds of years before, by *Ignatius*, who was biſhop of that church. This being over, and *the reader having* again made an end, [they are *Juſtin*'s words] *the preſident of the aſſembly exhorts to the practice and imitation of thoſe excellent things they had heard.* And indeed ſermons were THEN only expoſitions of the ſcripture, and enforcements of its doctrine upon the people: the groundwork being commonly taken from the leſſon juſt read, as freſheſt in the memory.

This courſe was held in the afternoons (at leaſt at times) as well as the mornings. *Chryſoſtom*, in an expreſs homily, commends the afternoon church-folks, even coming (ſays he) in greater numbers than in the forenoon. Who inſtead of a nap after their meal, have the divine laws urged home to the conſcience; and declining a walk upon *Change*, with the entertainment of unprofitable chit-chat, come and ſtand among their brethren in Chriſt, to converſe with the diſcourſes of the divine prophets. This (adds he) I put you in mind of and ſuggeſt to you; for though 'tis ſurely no reproach to ſatisfy nature ſoberly; yet when that's done, 'tis a ſhame to idle at home, and deprive your ſouls of their corruptleſs food." St. *Baſil*, St. *Auſtin*, and others, have references to the ſermons they had preached themſelves in the morning.

Theſe

Theſe diſcourſes were never ſo many, but the people were ready to entertain 'em. They found them armour of proof in their ſpiritual combats. *We ſolemnly meet* (ſays Tertullian) *to hear the holy ſcriptures illuſtrated and applied to us; that ſo, (according to the quality of the times,) we may be either forewarned or corrected by them: for certainly with the divine words we nouriſh our faith, elevate our hope, eſtabliſh our confidence; and by frequent inculcations of them, are firmer grounded in obedience to the Will of God.*

Sermon being ended, prayers were made with and for, the catechumens, the penitents, the demoniacs, reſpectively; each claſs departing, when what particularly concerned them was done. For the ſervice no ſooner came to this forwardneſs, but all who were unbaptized, or under the diſcipline of penance: that is; all who might not communicate, were commanded to quit the church, the deacon crying aloud, [Ite, miſſa eſt] *depart, there is a diſmiſſion of you.* Hence the whole ſervice, from the beginning till the hearers were ſent away, came by the name of *Miſſa Catechumenorum*; the maſs of the Catechumens: as the concluſion of the euchariſt was called *Miſſa Fidelium*; the maſs, or the ſervice, of the Faithful.

The reſt being departed, and the doors ſhut, they proceeded to the Lord's ſupper:

At

At which they interceeded for all ranks and ſtates of men, gave the kiſs of *heavenly love*, made their cheerful offerings, joined in the conſecration-prayer for the bread and wine, then received the food that ſtrengthens to eternal life.

CHAP. X.

Of Baptiſm.

OUR Lord having inſtituted Baptiſm and the Holy Supper, as the two great ſacraments of the chriſtian law, they have ever been accounted principal parts of public worſhip. We ſhall treat firſt of Baptiſm, the door of chriſtian fellowſhip, great and ſolemn rite of our initiation into the faith of Chriſt: concerning which, — four circumſtances are to be enquired into; the *perſons* by, and upon, whom, the *time* when, the *place* where, the *manner* how, this ſacrament was adminiſtered in the ancient church. For the perſons by whom the rite was performed; they were *the miniſters of Chriſt, and ſtewards of the myſteries of God*; preaching the goſpel and baptizing being joined by the Lord in the ſame commiſſion. Commonly it was done by the biſhop; without whoſe leave and authority

thority neither preſbyters nor deacons might baptize: and if they did, it was only in caſes of abſolute neceſſity. But as chriſtians increaſed, this became a more familiar part of the preſbyter's and the deacon's office.

Indeed in the churches of the heretics, women even in theſe times took upon them to baptize. But it was univerſally cry'd out againſt by the orthodox, and affixed as a note of diſhonour and reproach upon thoſe heretical parties; as is evident from *Tertullian*, *Epiphanius*, and all compilers of ancient hereſies. However; afterwards it crept into the church, in ſome places; and is practiſed in the church of *Rome* at this day; where they give leave in caſes of neceſſity, that baptiſm may be adminiſtered by any one.

Baptiſm was conferred both upon infants and grown perſons. How far infant-baptiſm is imply'd in the inſtitution, is not my work to debate: but certainly if in controverted caſes, the conſtant practice of the church is (as who can deny?) the beſt interpreter of the law of Chriſt, the diſpute ſhould be at an end; for it always was the cuſtom to receive the children of chriſtian parents into the church by baptiſm. This reſults from St. *Paul*'s writing to the *Romans*, "*Know ye not that ſo many of us as were baptized into Jeſus Chriſt, were baptized into His death?*" For

as

as the church of *Rome* appears to have been planted about the year 43, and that epiſtle was written in 58; that is; 15 years after; and yet the apoſtle ſpeaks of the converted *Romans* in general *as baptized*, it muſt be ſuppoſed, that baptiſm was adminiſtered, *at the time of their birth*, to thoſe whoſe parents were chriſtians.

But the people who in primitive times made up the main body of the baptized, were adults, or grown perſons; who flocking over daily to the faith of Chriſt, were received in at this door. Uſually, a conſiderable time was laid out in catechizing them; and the catechumens once o'week rendered an account of what they had learned to the biſhop, or preſbyter appointed to take their examination: till having given proof of their ſufficiency in knowledge, and of a ſober, laudable converſation, they became candidates for baptiſm, and obtained their admiſſion into the church: which brings me to the next circumſtance of note; *the time* when this was performed. At firſt all the year was alike, and perſons were baptized as occaſion ſerved: but the diſcipline of the church being tolerably ſettled, baptiſm was reſtrained to two ſtated ſeaſons, *Eaſter* and *Whitſuntide*.

Chriſt's death and reſurrection, correſpondent to which are —*the dying to ſin and riſing*

riſing again to newneſs of life, which appear diſtinctly figured out in baptiſm,—this led the ancients to fix upon *Eaſter*;—and the parties to be baptized were to fit themſelves by a ſtrict obſervance of Lent. *Whitſuntide* was choſen, in memory of the oft-mentioned deſcent of God's cleanſing ſpirit, as the ſame is in ſome degree repreſented, and conveyed in its effect, by baptiſm. I don't mean what has been ſaid—only of the preciſe days of Eaſter and Whitſuntide, but alſo of the intermediate ſpace of fifty days; the whole of which was accounted feſtival, and baptiſm adminiſtered all the time, as well as circumſtances of a ſick bed would allow. There is frequent mention in old church-writers of the *clinici*, perſons baptized as they lay in their beds. This was eſteemed a leſs ſolemn kind of baptiſm; partly, becauſe not done by immerſion, but by ſprinkling: partly, for their being ſuppoſed to requeſt it at ſuch a time, from no better principle than a fear of death. It was but too uſual in thoſe days (notwithſtanding the fathers thundered againſt it,) for perſons to delay being baptized, till they drew near their death,—from ſomewhat of a *Novatian* principle, that if they relapſed to ſin after the ſacrament of baptiſm, there would be no place for repentance. We may ſuppoſe it was for ſuch a reaſon, *Conſtantine the Great* deferred *his* till he lay o'dying: and *Socrates* records the ſame thing

thing of his ſon *Conſtantius*. To this cuſtom of clinic baptiſm, ſome not improbably think the apoſtle refers in the paſſage, where he ſpeaks of thoſe who are baptized for the dead.——*So ſays Dr.* Cave: *But I leave out the reſt of the paragraph, as I think it a very improbable, becauſe it is a weak ſenſe of St.* Paul's *words; and I hope the reader will be as ſatisfied as I am with the juſtneſs of that which* Doddridge *adopts: I ſhall give the ſpirited paſſage at full length.*——" Such are our views and hopes as chriſtians; elſe if it were not ſo, *what are they doing, who are baptized* in token of their embracing the chriſtian faith, *in the room of the dead*, who are juſt fallen in the cauſe of Chriſt; but are yet ſupported by a ſucceſſion of new converts, who immediately offer themſelves to fill up their places; as ranks of ſoldiers, that advance to the combat in the room of their companions, who have juſt been ſlain in their ſight. *If* the doctrine I oppoſe, be true, and *the dead riſe not at all, why are they nevertheleſs* thus *baptized in the room of the dead*, as chearfully ready at the peril of their lives to keep up the religion of Jeſus in the world."

For *the place* where this important action was performed:——It was at firſt undetermined; where-ever there was water, as *Juſtin Martyr* tells us: at ponds, and lakes; at ſprings, and rivers; but always near

near as poſſible to their public aſſemblies, being ſeldom done without the congregation, as it is a principal act of ſolemn devotion, and initiates into the church, whoſe members ſhould be monitors and checks to each other. Upon this account, they had, afterwards, their *baptiſteria*, or, as we call 'em, *fonts*, at firſt near the church-building, then in the porch, to repreſent baptiſm's being the entrance into the myſtical church; at length they were placed in the body of the building itſelf. For the moſt part, they were very capacious, not only to ſuit the practice of immerſion, but becauſe the ſeaſon of baptiſm returning ſo ſeldom, multitudes were initiated at the ſame time. There was in the font a diſtinct compartment for each ſex, divided off by a partition in the middle. Upon neceſſity they indeed allowed of private baptiſm, as in the caſe of the ſick, or of thoſe who were ſhut up in priſon; of which in the boiſterous times were many inſtances.

As to *the manner* of this ſacrament:—— Baptiſm, in the apoſtolic age, was adminiſtered with great ſimplicity and plainneſs; probably all the ceremony was no more than a ſhort prayer, and a pronouncing the words of inſtitution. Indeed it could not well be otherwiſe, conſidering the vaſt numbers frequently baptized at once. But following times added many

rites, differing often according to *period*, and *place*. I am far from undertaking to give an account of all; and ſhall only deſcribe the moſt remarkable method, and ſuch as generally obtained in thoſe ages. Perſons (as we have rêd) being now mature for baptiſm, petitioned the prelate, that it might be performed. Whereupon, at the ſolemn times, they were brought to the entrance of the baptiſtery, and ſtanding with their faces towards the weſt, (which, by its oppoſition to the place of light, figured the gloomy prince to be renounced,) were commanded to ſtretch out their arm in defiance of ſatan. In this poſture were they interrogated by the biſhop, concerning their ſurceaſe of all commerce with ſin, and the principalities of hell; as thus: *Doſt thou renounce the devil, and all his works, powers, and ſervices?* To which the party anſwered, *I do renounce all this.*" "*Doſt thou renounce the world, and all its pomps, and vanities?* Anſwer.—*I do renounce them.*

This renunciation was made twice; once before the congregation, probably at obtaining leave to be baptized; and again preſently after at the baptiſtery, as *Tertullian* teſtifies. Next they made open confeſſion of their faith; the biſhop aſking, "*Doſt thou believe in God the Father Almighty* — and ſo on.—*in Jeſus Chriſt His only Son, Who* — and ſo on. *Doſt thou believe*

lieve in the Holy Ghoſt, — the holy catholic church,—and in one baptiſm of repentance for remiſſion of ſins and everlaſting life? Whereto anſwer was returned, *I do believe.* This form of interrogation ſeems to have been very ancient, and the apoſtle is thought to have his eye upon it, when he ſtyles baptiſm —*the anſwer of a good conſcience towards God:* which cannot be referred to any thing ſo well, as theſe reſponſes by the baptized.

The actions and anſwers in the caſe of the adult, were performed by themſelves; in children, by their ſponſors. But that both infants and adults had thoſe who undertook for 'em at their baptiſm, is a well known matter.

There was a kind of exorciſm after this, —done by inſufflation, or breathing in the face of the baptized; (St. *Auguſtin* calls it a moſt ancient tradition of the church;) by which they ſignified the infuſion of God's good Spirit, to the expulſion of the evil ſpirit of this world: for *we are by nature children of wrath, enemies of God, and ſlaves to ſatan.* They laid no ſtreſs on theſe bare rites, but upon the church's prayers; which were at the ſame time fervently preſented: "*That God would deliver thoſe perſons from the power of ſatan, and by His Spirit incorporate them into the church.*" This being compleated, they were brought to the font, and there ſtript of their gar-

ments; an intimation, *that they put off the old man, which is corrupt, with his deceitful luſts.* THEN followed the unction; a ceremony of early date; by which (ſays *Cyril*) they held forth, that the former ſlips of the wild olive, now had an ingrafture into the *good olive-tree*, ſo becoming partakers of Chriſt's unmeaſurable fertility. It comprehends too, their admiſſion to theſe great priviledges; the being *a choſen generation, a royal prieſthood, an holy nation:* for anointing, 'tis vulgarly known, was an ancient ſymbol of deſignation to, and alſo of inveſtiture in, theſe ſolemn offices.

Together with this, we may ſuppoſe the ſign of the croſs was made upon the forehead. I don't meet with its preciſe commencement. St. *Baſil* reckons it among the ancient uſages received from the times of the apoſtles.

The action having proceeded thus far, the party was put under the water, an almoſt conſtant cuſtom of thoſe ages; by which they more ſignificantly expreſſed the three great views in baptiſm. For as there are theſe diſtinct acts in immerſion; — the plunging a perſon into water, — his ſtay there a little while, — and his riſing up again; ſo by theſe acts were repreſented, Chriſt's death, — burial—reſurrection: in correſpondence to which ſtand—our dying unto ſin — the deſtruction of its power in us—our reſurrection to a new courſe of life.

life. Therefore *as many as are baptized into Chriſt, are baptized into His death; and they are buried with Him by baptiſm into death; that the old man being crucified with Him, the body of ſin might be deſtroyed; that thenceforth they ſhould not ſerve ſin; for he that is dead, is freed from ſin.* And then the emerging out of the water was a beautiful emblem of the perſon's entering on a new courſe of life, *all different* from his old purſuits. *That like as Chriſt was raiſed up from the dead by the glorious operation of the Father, even ſo we alſo might walk in newneſs of life.* That *glory of the Father* is the work of His Bleſſed Spirit which does exaltedly glorify the Father.

But though, by reaſon of the eminent ſignificancy of theſe things, immerſion was the eſtabliſhed practice: yet held they not *ſprinkling* unlawful. And they without demur were for it in circumſtances of neceſſity; as in caſe of weakneſs, or danger of death, or where there was not conveniency of water. Nay *Cyprian* does not only allow it, but in a ſet diſcourſe pleads for it in ſuch circumſtances. [*Peter* recovered from his prejudices *as a Jew*, ſpeaks concerning the inſpired *Cornelius* and company, "*Can any man forbid water, that theſe ſhould not be baptized?*" Which paſſage *Doddridge* has this note upon: "*Eraſmus* ſuppoſes a trajection or tranſpoſition of the words here; as if it had been ſaid, *Who*

can forbid that theſe ſhould be baptized with water? But it ſeems moſt natural to underſtand it as Dr. *Whitby* does, *Who can forbid that water ſhould be brought?* In which view of the clauſe one would readily conclude it was done by *pouring water* upon them, rather than by plunging them in it: though (as elſewhere ſays that great author) in thoſe hot countries where bathing was ſo frequent, it is not to be wondered, baptiſm was generally adminiſtered by immerſion.—Of its eſſentiality to the rite he ſees no proof.]

The plunging was done thrice. This, *Baſil* and *Sozomon* will have to be derived from the apoſtles. Very early in the church it certainly was, being twice ſpoken of by *Tertullian* as common. By this trine immerſion they diſtinctly adored the Three Perſons of the ever glorious Trinity; ſo at the naming of the Father, — the Son— and the Holy Ghoſt——according to inſtitution, they each time plunged the party in water, as St. *Ambroſe* ſtill more expreſsly than *Tertullian*, informs us.

The perſon baptized being come out of the water, was a ſecond time anointed, as witneſſes *Cyril*; and then he had a white garment put upon him: a ſymbol, that having been diveſted of concupiſcence, and waſhed from all defilement of his former ſins, he determined to maintain a life of chriſtian innocence, of the

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unſpotted purity and virtue of a chriſtian. And it was delivered with this charge: *receive the white and immaculate garment, and bring it forth without ſpot before the tribunal of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, that thou mayſt have eternal life. Amen.*

It was the cuſtom for perſons to wear this lucid array a week, and then lay it up in the church, that it might remain an evidence againſt them, if they deny'd or violated that faith they had owned in baptiſm.

CHAP. XI.

Of the Lord's Supper.

THE holy and bleſſed ſacrament, inſtituted by our Lord ſo pathetically juſt before his death, and of ſuch unſpeakable conſequence in the chriſtian religion, is a rite that had prime place among the ancients in their united devotions. In handling which, I ſhall keep the ſame method as in the diſſertation upon baptiſm, noticing the perſons, the time, the place, and the manner of its celebration.

The *adminiſtering perſons* were always paſtors of the church, our Lord Himſelf having committed to the apoſtles and

their regular ſucceſſors, the diſpenſation of this His peculiar ordinance, till He came at the conſummation of all things. In ancient practice, the biſhop conſecrated the elements, and then the deacons diſtributed them to the congregation; nay, to abſent members of Chriſt: ——*expreſsly aſſerted by Juſtin Martyr.*

For the *communicating perſons:*——The whole body of chriſtians within ſuch a diſtrict, aſſembled at the table of the Lord with delighted aſſiduity. But whoſoever ſtood convict of any ſcandalous offence, were according to the degree of their fault, excluded from communion for a long, ——or ſtill longer time, —— nay for their whole lives. As for ſuch as could not be there through ſickneſs, or any ſufficient hindrance, ſome little pieces of conſecrated bread dipped in the cup, were commonly carried to them by the deacon.

I take no notice of the ſacrament's being given to newly baptized infants, as the caſe is ſo vulgarly known; and indeed it glares in ancient church-hiſtory.

For the time: — It was *always* on the Lord's day in their public aſſemblies; beſides other days, and eſpecially Saturday; when all the churches in the world (thoſe of *Rome* and *Alexandria* alone excepted) celebrated this ſacrament. The part of the day they took for it, is not ſo certain. Our bleſſed Saviour opened the ſervice with

with His apoſtles at night; but whether theſe and their immediate ſucceſſors punctually obſerved the *paſſover-hour*, may juſtly be queſtioned. The holy euchariſt in the Corinthian church, ſeems to have been ſolemnized in the morning. *Tertullian* aſſures us, it was not only executed in tempore victûs, *about ſupper-time* (as all underſtand him) in his age, but very often in the morning before day, when they had their religious aſſemblies. While the ſpirit of chriſtianity held warm and vigorous, they communicated every day, even as often as they aſſembled for worſhip; ſo that the apoſtolical canons and the ſynod of *Carthage*, threaten every one of the faithful with excommunication, who ſhould come to hear the ſcriptures expounded, yet deſpiſe their ſhare in the holy ſupper.

Chriſtians then kept the mental eye wholly fixed upon their crucified Saviour, and the oftner they fed at His table, the more hale they were, and ſet their faces like a flint againſt raging perſecution. This every-day communicating continued a conſiderable while, though longer in ſome churches, eſpecially the *weſtern*, than others. We are ſure from *Cyprian*, it was ſo in his time. "*Every day* (ſays he) *receive we the ſacrament to the ſuſtenance of our ſouls.* St. *Ambroſe* reports the ſame of *Milan*, where he was biſhop. *Hierom*, after him, tells us it was ſo in *Rome*, ——

miſſing Saturday only, to prepare particularly for the Lord's day. And *Auguſtin* intimates plainly,—in *his* century it was not unuſual.

Concerning the place of celebration, there needs not much be ſaid. It was always performed in their religious aſſemblies, —— as 'tis a main part of ſocial devotion. Our Lord inſtituted the ſacrament in a private houſe, the neceſſity of that time not admitting otherwiſe. By the apoſtles it was celebrated in the houſes of believers, generally in the privacy of an upper room, by the bounty of ſome chriſtians ſet apart for the uſes of the church. Under the great perſecutions they were drove to mountains; to their cryptæ, *vaſt ſubterraneous vaults*; and performed the euchariſt at the tombs of martyrs, and over the aſhes of the dead. Churches growing into a regular form, the ſeveral parts of the ſervice had diſtinct places. The upper or *eaſt* end of the church was aſſigned to the communion-table; which was firſt of wood; but that gave place to ſtone. Both of them were, not uncommonly, though metaphorically, ſtyl'd altars by the fathers. This part of the church was fenced in with rails, within which the clergy communicated, as the laity received without.

We come in the laſt place to the *manner of the ceremony*:— But before we enter

ter on this deſcription, let us obſerve; that ſoon as the ſervice of the catechumens was over, and previous to that of the faithful, they made their proportionable offerings, none thinking fit to appear before the Lord empty. —— Theſe were laid by the miniſter upon the communion-table. *This* was a fund for the maintenance of the miniſtry; the relief of the poor; eſpecially there was taken out of it for the *bread* and *wine*. The bread was no other but common. Alſo from this iſſued a contribution to the ſocial feaſts, in which love leveled the rich with the poor, while celebrating the *love of loves*. But abuſe, alas, got footing in them; and an apoſtle found cauſe to blame the Corinthians for ſelf-gratification, and not waiting meekly one for another. However; the *feaſts of charity* continued ſome ages, till, too great inconveniencies ariſing therefrom, they were aboliſhed in churches by the *Laodicean* ſynod; afterwards by the council of *Carthage*; and the practice in a ſhort time dwindled into nothing.

The elements prepared,———and all things ready,———they proceeded to the action; which was thus diſcharged: Firſt, the deacon brought water to the biſhop and preſbyters ſtanding round the table, for their hands; becauſe of the purity that ought, eſpecially, to be in perſons ſtation-

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ed ſo near God. Then the deacon cry'd aloud, *kiſs one another*. The holy ſalute was very ancient, an eſtabliſht practice in the apoſtles days, and uſed in the ſubſequent ages of the church; *only particularly* at the ſacrament, denoting an unfeigned reconciliation of their minds, and the oblivion of all paſt injuries.

This executed, they apply'd to prayer; all the congregation with the miniſter—— ſupplicating for the univerſal peace and welfare of the church — for the tranquility and proſperity of the world—and the happineſs of future ages —— for wholſome weather and fruitful ſeaſons—for all ſort of perſons—for kings, emperors, and all in authority ——— for ſoldiers and armies, mariners and commerce——for believers and unbelievers, and for friends,——for the ſick, and the diſtreſt, and for their enemies:——In ſhort, for all who needed help, that is; for mankind. This general prayer is frequently noticed by the primitive fathers, and as what the communion-ſervice begun with.

Now was the mutual ſalutation of the miniſter and the people; the former crying, *The Lord be with you*. To whom they anſwered, *And with* thy *ſpirit*. Then the miniſter ſaid, *Lift up your hearts*; the reſponſe was, *We lift them up unto the Lord*. Proceeds the miniſter, *Let us give thanks unto the Lord*; to which the people rejoin,

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It is very juſt ſo to do. Whereupon advances he to the prayer of conſecration; in which he expreſſes their thankfulneſs to God for the death, reſurrection, and aſcenſion of His Son,——for the condeſcending admiſſion of them to ſuch mighty benefits. —He implores a more perfect union each to other in the ſame myſtical body.—— Concluding uſually with the Lord's prayer, and the acclamation of amen by all preſent. This grand ſoul-work done, the miniſter ſaid aloud, *Holy things belong to holy perſons* [ΤΑ ΑΓΙΑ ΤΟΙΣ ΑΓΙΟΙΣ] the people anſwer, *There is one Holy, ONE LORD JESUS CHRIST.* Then exhorts he them to a due participation of theſe moſt venerable myſteries.

After this, the biſhop or preſbyter taking the ſacramental elements, ſanctified them by an awful benediction. The form of conſecration we have in St. *Ambroſe*, as follows:

LORD, make this oblation now prepared for us, to become a reaſonable and acceptable ſacrifice; this, which is the figure of the body and blood of our LORD JESUS CHRIST; Who the day before He ſuffered, took the bread in His ſacred hands, looked up to heaven, giving thanks to Thee, O holy Father, almighty and ever-laſting GOD, bleſſed it, and having broke it, gave it to His diſciples, ſaying, Take, eat ye all——of it; for this is my body,

body which is broken for many. Likewiſe alſo He took the cup that very day before he ſuffered, looking up to heaven, giving thanks to Thee, Holy Father, Almighty, Ever-laſting GOD, and having bleſſed it, gave it to thoſe His diſciples; ſaying, Take, drink ye all—— of it; for this is my blood.

Then the biſhop firſt broke the bread and delivered it to the deacon, who *diſtributed* to the congregation: after that, *the cup* paſſed through the hands of the prelate, which was likewiſe communicated popularly: for the practice of receiving under one kind only was quite unknown to thoſe days, nay for a thouſand years from Chriſt.

The ſacramental wine was generally mixed with water, as is reported by *Juſtin Martyr*, *Irenæus*, *Cyprian*, and others. *Cyprian* urges it in a long epiſtle, being traditional from the Lord and his apoſtles.

The poſture they received in was not always alike. The apoſtles to-be-ſure, at its inſtitution, were reclined (after the Jewiſh cuſtom) upon couches round about the table. I cannot find how long this manner continued. In *Dionyſius Alexandrinus*'s time they communicated ſtanding. But other poſtures were ſettled, as the pious prudence of the church judged ſuitable.

During

During adminiſtration, which in populous congregations was no ſmall time, they uſed to celebrate hymns and pſalms. The whole action was ſolemnly concluded with prayer and thankſgiving.

End of the Firſt Part of Primitive Chriſtianity.

Primitive CHRISTIANITY.

PART II.

The religion of the ancient chriſtians as to the virtues which regarded themſelves.

CHAP. I.

Of their Humility.

AFTER piety to God, comes the part of religion reſpecting, *immediately*, ourſelves; pourtray'd to perfection by the apoſtle in the word *Sobriety:* for *which*, the chriſtians were not leſs renowned than for the preceding. Diſtinguiſhable was their *humility*, their contempt of the world, their temperance and their continence, their courage and their conſtancy, and their exemplary patience under grievous ſufferings.

To begin with the firſt!—Humility is a virtue proper to the goſpel, which brings man ſo near the angelic nature. That this

this was the very ſoul of primitive chriſtians appears in their ſhunning ambition, in their cheerful ſtooping under the meaneſt and moſt diſguſtful offices. How earneſtly they declined all addreſſes of applauſe! how ready rather to give praiſe, than take it to themſelves, *in honour preferring one another!*

When *Cyprian* was choſen biſhop by the chriſtians at *Carthage*, his great modeſty and humility made him run away at the news, judging himſelf unfit for ſo weighty and honourable an employment, and requeſting that a worthier perſon, and one of his ſeniors in the faith might hold the place. But the deſires of the people being hightened by his withdrawing, — they having diſcovered where he was, ſurrounded the houſe, and block'd up all paſſages of eſcape; which made him endeavour to get off by a window; but here being defeated, he unwillingly acquieſced; the multitude impatiently waiting, divided between hope and fear, till ſeeing him come forth, they received him with univerſal joy and profound ſatisfaction *. With no leſs humility he deported himſelf in the execution of his office. When conſulted by ſome of his clergy what was to be done about the *lapſed*, he anſwered, that being now by himſelf, he could ſay nothing to it; for he

* See *Ech. Eccleſ. Hiſtory*, p. 590.

he had determined at entering upon his biſhopric, to decide no caſe by his own unauthorized order, without the counſel of his clergy, and the conſent of the people. So meanly thought this very great man of his own abilities, and ſo much attributed he to the judgment and concurrence of perſons below him.

Nazianzen reports of his father (a biſhop too,) that among other virtues he was peculiarly remarkable for humility; which he expreſſed not by little arts of outward carriage; putting on a fictitious behaviour, like women who having no perſonal beauty, fly to the embelliſhments of dreſs and paint. His humility lay not in his garb, but in the lowly conſtancy of his mind; not in the hanging down his head, or in the ſoftneſs of his tone, or the demureneſs of his look, or the gravity of his beard, nor yet in the manner of his gait; but in the frame of a ſelf-abaſed ſoul, being in his temper as ſtooping and proſtrate, as he was ſublime and excellent in his life; and when no man could arrive at the perfection of his virtues, yet every one was admitted to a freedom of converſe with him."

How ſtrongly many times find we them repulſing their merited praiſe. *Juſtin Martyr* puts aſide his adverſary's commendation of his reaſonings, attributing the elegance and acuteneſs of 'em, with his underſtanding

derſtanding and expounding ſcripture, all to the gifts and grace of God; of which he calls men freely to become partakers with him. Concerning the confeſſors in the *Aurelian* perſecution, *Euſebius* informs us, that though at the deareſt rate on this ſide death, they had often borne witneſs to the truth, though they had been more than once thrown to wild beaſts, half roaſted alive with the tormenting fire, and remains of wounds and violence were viſible in all parts of their bodies, nevertheleſs they would not after all this (which yet was common in thoſe days,) either call themſelves martyrs, or ſuffer others ſo to ſtyle 'em. But if in converſation, or in a letter, any of their brethren ſaluted them as ſuch, they would reprimand 'em ſeverely for it, acknowledging themſelves at beſt but vile and deſpicable confeſſors, and with tears intreating the importunity of chriſtians with God, that they might perfect all by a real martyrdom.

I ſhall only inſtance in one point more; that is; their ready condeſcending to any employment, though moſt abject, about the obſcureſt chriſtians. They never thought it beneath them to provide and cook victuals for 'em, to viſit the impriſoned, dreſs their wounds, waſh their feet, kiſs their chains. In the lowlineſs of waſhing feet, the Sovereign Lord had led the way.

way *. We find accordingly this to have been a frequent uſage in the church. St. *Paul* demands it for a qualification in a widow who was to be admitted deaconeſs, that ſhe be one accuſtomed to lodge ſtrangers, and waſh the ſaints feet, dirty and chafed with travelling. *Tertullian* affirms, it was uſual in his time, for chriſtians to go into the priſons, kiſs and embrace the martyrs chains; to harbour and provide for indigent brethren, and fetch water to waſh the ſaints feet. No ſervice ſo low; which they were not content to take upon them.

When the empreſs *Placilla* was checkt by ſome of the court for viſiting the hoſpitals, and curing the lame and ſick with her own hands, ſhe anſwered, *That to diſtribute gold ſuited the emperor*, ſhe *thought herſelf obliged to do this for God, who had raiſed her to her dignity.* Often inſtilling this counſel into her huſband, *It becomes you, Sir, always to remember what you once were, and where you are now exalted. So will you ſhow yourſelf not ungrateful to your High Benefactor, and govern the empire juſtly and faithfully, to the honour of Him Who intruſted you with it.*

* See St. John xiii. 4—15.

CHAP. II.

Of their celeſtial thoughts, and contempt of the world.

THE ſoul of man being heaven-born, can hardly loſe all participation of that country; but retains ſome aſpiring diſpoſition to the place of its original. And though 'tis true, in this fallen and corrupted ſtate, it is deeply ſunk into matter, clogg'd and overborne with the ſenſual propenſities of the lower appetites; the deſires and deſigns of men creeping up and down like ſhadows upon the face of the earth: yet the mind of a good man dwells in the meditation of the upper regions; it tramples upon thoſe little projects of profit or pleaſure, which enſnare and inſlave other men, and all its aims are ſubſervient to a verily important world: A temper of mind never more triumphant in any, than in the ancient chriſtians; whoſe converſation was in heaven; and their ſpirits breathed in too free an air, to be caught with the higheſt delights of this poor world.

" Among us (ſays *Tatian*) there is no affectation of tranſitory honour, but ſeparating our minds from all earthly objects, and having given up ourſelves to the glory of God, we abandon all that has the leaſt relation

relation to human renown." Being dead to the charms of lucre, they never met with opportunities to advance and enrich themſelves, but they rejected them with a moſt magnanimous ſcorn. When *Abgarus*, the toparch of *Edeſſa*, offered *Thaddeus* great ſums of gold for his public ſervices, *Thaddeus* refuſed them with theſe words, *To what purpoſe ſhould we receive good things from others who voluntarily have renounced our own?* Indeed in thoſe times, friends and relations, houſes and lands were cheerfully parted with; they contented themſelves with the nakedeſt poverty, and could rejoice therein, if it might but conſiſt with the chriſtian profeſſion. When *Quintianus* the preſident under the emperor *Decius*, aſked *Agatha*, that virgin-martyr, why, being deſcended of rich and illuſtrious parents, ſhe would apply herſelf to ſuch depreſt offices as ſhe diſcharged? Preſently ſhe replied, our glory and nobility conſiſts in being Jeſus's ſervants. To the ſame purport was *Quintinus*'s anſwer, who under the Diocletian perſecution was aſk'd, how a Roman citizen and ſon of a ſenator, as he was, could worſhip *Him*, whom the Jews by Roman Hands had crucify'd? *Why*, (ſays the Martyr,) *it is the higheſt honour and dignity, to know and ſerve God, the great, exalted Creator of heaven and earth, and His Son, Jeſus Chriſt our Lord, by Whom all things were made,*

made, and Who is in every reſpect Equal with His Father.

As to eſtate; they were not concerned about more than would ſupply the wants of nature, or the neceſſities of others; Far from ſolicitous to acquire revenues inſpiring envy or fear into men; as will appear by this example out of many: *Domitian* the emperor, being informed there were yet remaining ſome of Chriſt's kindred, two grandchildren of the apoſtle *Jude*, the Lord's brother, that jealous ſovereign ſending for them, enquired whether they were not of the line of *David?* They anſwered, his information was true. He aſked, what profeſſions and eſtates they had? They told him they had between them thirty-nine acres of land, (to the value of about nine thouſand Roman pence;) out of the products of which, they paid him tribute, and maintained themſelves by hard labour, to which the callus of their hands then bore witneſs." He next examined them upon the dominion of Chriſt;—— they told him their Lord's kingdom was not of this world, but evangelical and heavenly; which would take place in the conſummation of ages, when he ſhould glorioufly appear to judge finally the living and the dead, and recompence all his rational creatures according to their deeds." Which when he heard, contemning the men upon account of their meanneſs, he let 'em

'em go without any ſeverity againſt them. Of *Origen* we are well informed, that he was ſo great a deſpiſer of the world, that when he might have ſubſiſted upon a maintenance from others, he refuſed it entirely, and parted with his library to one who was to allow him fi'pence a day. The hours of buſineſs he ſpent in laborious taſks, reading lectures and expounding ſcripture, and the greateſt part of the night in ſtudy and writing. He always remembered thoſe precepts of our Saviour, *Not to be curious in his garments—nor anxious about the events of to-morrow.* He would not accept the kindneſs of ſeveral, when they would freely have given him ſome part of their eſtate.

Nor were they more ſtudious of diverſions abroad, than of elegance at home. They appeared at no public feaſts, nor were preſent at ſhows for the entertainment of the people.—This conduct they ſaw themſelves held to by their baptiſmal vow; namely; *to renounce the devil and all his works; the pomps and vanities of this wicked world.* "That is (ſays St. *Cyril*;) to-be-ſure Plays." They abhorred theſe paſtimes begetting and inflaming pride, folly, luſt, inſolence. The theaters they knew to be the very domain of the arc-enemy of humble virtue and all who frequented there to be his ſubjects, whatever they might think of themſelves. Accordingly, *Tertullian* tells us of a chriſtian woman,

woman, who going to a play, came there under the *ſenſible* power of the devil. But when at his ejection, the evil ſpirit was aſkt, how he dared to moleſt and poſſeſs a ſervant of Chriſt? "I did but what was fit and juſt (ſaid he;) for I found her upon my own ground."

Thus trampling the vain deceitful world, they reſigned any thing that was deareſt to them; friends, eſtate, liberty, life itſelf. Memorable is St. *Jerom*'s ſtory of a lady his contemporary; that her huſband lying dead by her, ſhe loſt her two ſons at the ſame time; and when every one expected her immoderate burſt of grief, *Melania* (that was her name) ſtood ſilent and ſtill; at laſt dropping down as at the dear Saviour's feet, broke out, LORD, *I ſhall ſerve Thee more nimbly and readily, being diſcharged from theſe temporary cares.*

Nay ſo little kindneſs did they feel for this life, that they were indifferent with regard to their ſtay in it. *Tertullian* reminds his adverſaries, that all the plagues which unpeopled the earth, (what damage ſoever they might do the Goſpel's foes) could in no ſort hurt the chriſtians, becauſe their ſingle concernment in this life, was, ſoon as God permitted, to get well rid of it. This the very Gentiles aſſigned for one reaſon, why the chriſtians were trained in a defiance of all the pleaſures of the world, that they might be willinger to die, and,

the confining cords being ready looſened, more expedite for their paſſage from earth. "Inflamed (ſays *Juſtin Martyr*) with deſire of a pure and eternal exiſtence, we ſtretch after an intimate fruition of God, great Creator, and Beſt of Fathers in *the Beloved*, and make haſte to ſeal this confeſſion with our blood." This grand cordial kept the ſpirits up in their immenſe ſufferings; even the unſhaken expectation of *ſeeing God* in a better life. They knew, the more violent were the foes of God, to break down their bodily cages, the ſooner their ſouls would ſoar away to the regions of bleſſed immortality. It was their care then to keep company with dying thoughts, and dwell within the proſpect of eternity; *that* being true of all, which *Hierom* particularly relates of *Marcella*, that ſhe ſo lived as always believing ſhe ſhould preſently die, and never put on her garments, but it minded her of her grave, and the ſheet that ſhould enwrap her in the houſe of ſilence.

CHAP.

CHAP. III.

Of their ſobriety in point of apparel.

THESE divine philoſophers ſo victorious over the world, not like queer *Bramins* in woods, but living in the midſt of its allurements, we may be ſure were very frugal in apparel: they knew better uſes for their money: and they were likewiſe exceeding moderate in food, and furniture.—Mighty ſolicitous were they to avoid coſtlineſs and finery, chuſing veſtures expreſſive of the greateſt lowlineſs and innocence. "The garments we wear (ſays *Clemens of Alexandria*) ought to be mean and frugal, not curiouſly wrought with a variety of colours, a right emblem of craftineſs and deceit. The outward cloathing ſtrongly marks the inner man. That is true plainneſs of habit, which prunes away all that is expenſive or ſhowy; that is the ſubſtantial garment, which beſt defends the body, and is moſt remote from a ſtretch of invention and labour." *Chryſoſtom* ESPECIALLY commends *Olympias*, a woman of high birth and great eſtate, for the modeſty and meanneſs of her dreſs, only *tighter* than that of the pooreſt beggar; having nothing about her gaudy, nothing elaborate or artificial. Which things (ſays he) were the beautiful indications and repreſentations of her virtue; whereby the

wiſdom in the ſoul was externally delineated and brought into view."

It may be proper juſt to notice what the gallants of thoſe days pleaded, and the anſwers return'd 'em. Sometimes they'd urge they were rich, and ought to live like themſelves, making uſe of the eſtates God had aſſigned them. *Cyprian* replies to this "The truly rich have their opulence in the Fountain of all wealth. But the world is to be trampled on, whoſe pomps we renounced, when we turned from vanity to God; with the bleſſed love of Whom, all that is in the world, *the luſt of the fleſh, the luſt of the eye, and the pride of life*, is an abſolute inconſiſtency. The uſe of riches is to be adjuſted by moderate Calls, ſince an apoſtle commands all women, without excepting the moſt wealthy, *to adorn themſelves in modeſt apparel, with ſhamefac'dneſs and ſobriety; not with braided hair, or gold, or pearls, or coſtly array, but (which becomes women profeſſing godlineſs) with good works.* And he alſo demands at their hands *the hidden ornament of the heart*, reinculcating—*to put away the outward adorning of gold, and every curious habit.* That if they thought themſelves bound to uſe the eſtates God *indeed* had intruſted them with, his ſcripture ſhowed them a more excellent way, no other but to relieve the diſtreſt, to clothe after you have fed your ſtarving fellow-creatures; and then,

then, if poſſible, find employment for them. That is the only innocent uſe of riches; More: — it is the method of laying them up corruptleſs in an undecaying treaſury."

Theſe were times, in which a chriſtian's purity was not ſtained with external decoration. "The lovelineſs of the body (ſays *Clemens of Alexandria*) lies in a good complexion and ſymmetry of parts: but the greateſt beauty in nature is that of the ſoul, ornamented with the graces of the ſpirit of God, chaſtity, prudence, juſtice, fortitude, temperance, and the love of goodneſs; which makes the moſt charming object the eye of conſideration can behold."

I conclude with St. *Gregory*'s account of his ſiſter *Gorgonia:* that ſhe uſed no gold, no hair arranged in curls, no luſtre of ſtones and jewels, no aſſumption of beauty eaſily purchaſed: all this was far, far from her. And though ſhe had a ſagacious eye for taking in the modes among women, ſhe held none of them ſo graceful as the faſhion of a pure life, and that inward luſtre which gilded every chamber of her mind. The only red to her fancy was the tinge of bluſhing virtue; no white for her but what came by faſting and conſtant abſtinence." To which I cannot but add one ſtricture of *Tertullian*, who counſels the fair ſex to clothe themſelves with the ſilks of honeſty, the fine veſt-

ments of piety, the purple of modeſty; and when you are thus beautify'd, ſays he, God Himſelf, through the grace that is by Chriſt, will be your lover.

CHAP. IV.

Of their great Temperance and Abſtinence.

AMONG the many temptations beſetting the life of man, there's ſcarce a more inceſſant danger, or more intrapping enticement, than a curiouſneſs in meats and drinks, and an indulgence to the pleaſure of the palate. Therefore it is, that chriſtianity urges—*to be temperate in all things, to watch and be ſober, to caſt off the works of darkneſs, to walk honeſtly as in the day, not in rioting and drunkenneſs, not in chambering and wantonneſs, not in exceſs of wine, revellings and banquettings; to ſee to it that our hearts are not at any time overcharged with ſurfeiting and debauchery;*—*and that we be not as the men of the old world, who were taken up with eating and drinking, when the flood coming ſwept them and all away.* The law of Chriſt obliges—*to keep the body under, making no proviſion for the fleſh to fulfil its luſts.*—and when that word ſays "*But ye, when ye faſt,*" it plainly ſuppoſes us to faſt.

faſt. Now if nature, well regulated, is content with little, religion is content with leſs. Theſe rules preſt by Them upon others, the ancient chriſtians punctually followed themſelves.

They knew very well God had given men a charter, indifferently to enjoy the creatures in a due degree; but were cautious of proceeding ſo far as they might, —of doing what ſhould but have the look of indulgence, or argue an earth-coveting mind. St. *Baſil* obſerves, that upon account of different ages, conſtitutions, oppoſit courſe of life, and other circumſtances varying the caſe, 'Tis impoſſible to lay down one immutable rule for all, or for any at all times. Nevertheleſs, let our diet be regulated after its original intendment; which was not by any means—to gratify ſenſuality, but to enable nature for needful exertions. "Many (ſays *Clemens Alexandrinus*) like *brute-beaſts*, live for little beſides the pleaſure of eating; but we are diſpoſed to eat, that we may live with utility; ſo our nouriſhment ſhould be ſimple and eaſy of digeſtion; ſuch moſt producing two fundamentals of uſefulneſs, health and ſtrength." St. *Cyprian* giving directions concerning prayer, requires perſons to eat and drink very ſparingly, that the ſenſual load may not clog their ſouls movements." And *Læta* is adviſed in the education of her daughter, that her diet ſhould

be thin and mean, nor more in quantity, than that ſhe might preſently be fit to read, or to ſing pſalms.

When they were preſent at weddings, or attended any feſtivals, the church thought fit to lay them under reſtraints, not only forbidding light and ludicrous geſtures; leaping or dancing: but ordered, they ſhould dine and ſup ſlightly and with ſerioufneſs, as becomes chriſtians.

To partake the *alone ſatisfying* ſpiritual nouriſhment, was the fixing point of attention to them. So the jewels were but right, they little minded what proviſions they had for the caſkets of clay. In truth, frequent watchings added to faſting, and an undeviating obſervance of the ſtricteſt parts of devotion, left viſible marks in their faces. And this was ſo notorious, that their enemies reproached them with their trembling joints, and their wan ghaſtly looks. In particular, *Lucian* giving an account of the aſſembly of chriſtians, where *Critias* was introduced to be proſelyted, deſcribes them to be *a company of perſons with their heads hanging down, and pale faces.* To this purpoſe, moſt appoſit is *Baſil*'s comment; "Other private virtues are not ſo edifying to the world; but abſtinence ſhows itſelf at firſt ſight. For as a hale complexion and tight compacture of body, mark a fitneſs for the part of a ſtage-

ſtage-champion, ſo a meagre form and paleneſs, effects of abſtinence, evidence the chriſtian to be a real champion.

CHAP. V.

Of their ſingular continence and chaſtity.

A Third moſt conſiderable inſtance of that ſobriety, which caſt its beautiful rays over the chriſtians character, was their alienation, utter alienation from all manner of uncleanneſs. Theſe impregnable perſons were ſo wide of unchaſte embraces, that frequently they kept remote from the honourable marriage bed. "We are (ſays *Octavius*) chaſte in our ſpeech, but chaſter in our bodies, and numbers of us inviolably preſerve a perpetual virginity. Thus, ye unjuſt accuſers, ſo averſe are we to any extravagant lawleſs deſire, that we ſtand at a diſtance from the modeſt conjugal endearments." "There are not a few of both ſexes with us (ſays the apologiſt,) who for ſixty, and ſeventy years have preſerved an uncorrupted celibacy, chooſing a more diſengaged ſtate to ſerve the Lord Who bought them with a price indeed.

But when any married, they moſtly profeſſed it was in ſubſerviency to the deſign

of that appointment; all deſires (ſay they,) when that is anſwered, are laid under an extinguiſhing imbargo; as the huſbandman concerns himſelf no further in tilling the land and ſowing ſeed, than to raiſe a crop in the ſeaſon.

And they ſhunned provocatives to the irregularity they would avoid. Unwilling to be at an entertainment—the theaters they abominated, and fled from the appearance of *deteſted Evil.* St. *Cyprian* chides ſome virgins ſeverely for going to a wedding. *Hierom* as ſtrongly commends young maidens of his acquaintance, whoſe affections were not ſet to ſuch a gaiety. And who on great feſtivals always kept at home, to be covered from the gazes of the people.

The church took the niceſt care, that unmarry'd perſons ſhould not converſe in common. *Cyprian* writing to *Pomponius*, charges him not to let young men and maidens ſleep near one another, nor, if poſſible, live in the ſame houſe; leſt the ſlipperineſs of youth involve them in the Satanic entanglement.

They preferred chaſtity by far to life, and readily ſuffered rather the acuteſt torments than a violation of it. When *Maximinus* governed in the eaſt of the empire, he filled all places where he came with adulteries and raviſhments: which ſucceeded well enough (ſays the hiſtorian) with all others except chriſtians, who generouſly con-

contemning death, made light of the fury and cruelty of the tyrant. The men ſuſtained all the effects of boundleſs rage and power; the women bore up with a courage no leſs unconquerable; and when drawn out to be abuſed, ſubmitted their Lives to torture, before their bodies to diſhonour.

CHAP. VI.

Of their readineſs and conſtancy in profeſſing their religion.

WHEN the Prince of life ſent abroad his diſciples to preach the goſpel, he informed them of the difficulty their meſſage would encounter with. But charged them likewiſe not to regard at all the ſcoffs, the reproaches, and ſufferings which ſhould come upon them. *Fear not* (ſaid he) *them who can kill the body, but afterwards have no more which they can do.* And his bleſſed ſervant *Paul acted* the precept, writing thus while in chains; *Ye chriſtians, ſtand faſt in the ſpirit, with one mind; ſtriving together for the faith of the goſpel, in nothing terrified by your adverſaries; it being given you upon the account of Chriſt, not only to believe in Him, but alſo to ſuffer for His ſake.* And certainly if

if ever greatneſs of ſoul appeared on earth, it ſhone in the chriſtians of thoſe times. With ſuch a brave unterrify'd mind defy'd they all dangers and tortures, glorifying God by a noble confeſſion of chriſtianity. When *Maris*, biſhop of *Chalcedon*, a perſon blind with age, met *Julian* the emperor, he boldly charged him with his idolatry, and his apoſtacy from the chriſtian religion. *Julian* taunted him with his blindneſs, and told him his Galilean God would never cure him. To which the old excellent man anſwered, *I thank my God Who has taken away my ſight, that I might not behold the face of one that has lapſed into ſo great impiety.*

Were they attempted by arts of flattery and enticement, the charms made no impreſſion upon them. The ſame *Julian* with his own ſkilful addreſs, and by the officers of the army, ſet upon the ſoldiers, ſeeking by rewards to ſeduce them from chriſtianity: but though with a few unſtable minds he ſucceeded, the far greater part ſtood off; yes, by many of the meaneſt rank, his ſolicitations were as firmly repulſed, as a blow from an engine is beaten back by a wall of marble. And here ſee how the oppoſit method took effect. When *Modeſtus* the governor under *Valens* the *Arian* emperor, could by no fair means bring over *Baſil* to the party, he threatened him with ſeverity: doſt thou not

not fear this power that I have? Why ſhould I fear, ſaid the ſaint; what can'ſt *thou* do? What can *I* ſuffer? The governor anſwered, the loſs of thy eſtate, baniſhment, torments and death. But threaten us with ſomething elſe if thou canſt (replies *Baſil*;) for none of theſe things have power to reach us: confiſcation of eſtate cannot hurt him that has nothing but theſe thread-bare garments, and a few books. Nor can I properly be baniſht; for the whole earth is my God's; in which I am but a pilgrim and ſtranger. I fear no torments: and death will diſpatch me to the inviſible king, whom my ſoul doth love and adore."

Polycarp had timely notice to have eſcaped, when the officers were ſent to ſeize him; but he ſaid, *God's will be done:* and coming out of his chamber ſaluted them with a pleaſant face. As they were carrying him back (for *hither* he had fled two perſons of high rank overtaking) him, made him ſit with them in their chariot, and laboured to induce him to ſacrifice: but when their utmoſt importunities were ineffectual, their kindneſs turned to bitter reproach, and they tumbled him with ſuch violence out of the car, that he was very much bruiſed by his fall. — But nothing-daunted, as if he had received no harm, he chearfully went on his way. The proconſul aſked him at the tribunal, if he was *Polycarp:* which he imme-

immediately confeſſed. The judge then attempted by every art to move him to deny Chriſt, or only do ſomething like it. Yet all in vain. *Theſe threeſcore and ten years* (ſays the holy man) *I have ſerved Chriſt, and never found Him unkind. Can I then blaſpheme my beneficent Maſter and precious Saviour?* The proconſul told him, he would throw him to the wild beaſts. *Call for them* (anſwers the biſhop) *for we have no mind to change from better to worſe, judging no change but from vice to virtue, laudable.* If thou ſo little valueſt ſavage beaſts (ſays the proconſul) I have got a fire that ſhall ſurely tame thee. *Polycarp* briſkly rejoined, *Aye, aye, your fire will ſoon go out; but the future fire for wicked men, and eſpecially for perſecutors of the Good, is inextinguiſhable.*

Had not the courage of chriſtians been torture-proof, that and their religion together had preſently been eraſed; but in all hights of pain was their bravery MEEKLY VICTORIOUS; rearing its head in proportion to efforts for ſinking it. The weaker ſex had their full ſhare in this triumph, as was ſeen at large in *Blandina*'s ſuperhuman endurance. So ſuffered the brave confeſſors *Euſebius* ſaw with his own eyes at *Thebais*. Though with a barbarity tired in contrivances, there had been multitudes daily executed, yet no ſooner ſentence was given forth againſt one party of them, but others, *in a crowd*, preſented themſelves

ſelves at the tribunal, owning their being chriſtians; and theſe received doom with moſt jubilant joy. The like is recorded by that hiſtorian, concerning ſix youths martyr'd in *Paleſtine*; who voluntarily addreſſed themſelves to the governour, made public confeſſion of chriſtianity, and of their readineſs in maintenance of it, to ſuffer all he could inflict. In the *acts* of St. *Cyprian*'s *Paſſion* we are informed, that the preſident having cauſed an enormous furnace to be filled with fire and burning lime, with heaps of frankincenſe round the brim, put the chriſtians to their choice, to take and ſacrifice in honour of Jupiter, or be thrown in. Whereupon three hundred men teſtifying Chriſt to be the Son of God, jumped into the flaring deſtruction.

CHAP. IX.

Of their exemplary patience under perſecution.

THE world would not ſuffer itſelf to be oppoſed with impunity; and ſo diſſonant was Chriſt's *kind rigour* with mens corrupt inclinations, and the purity of His worſhip with the lewd ſolemnities of their religion, that fury with a ſwell like the ſea in trouble, broke upon the higheſt benefit ever offered

offered to man, aud the emperors made it their maſter-deſign to extirpate the infant lovely inſtitution. [*Here our author inſerts a deſcription of the Martyrs Tortures: but for this I refer the reader to the firſt chapter of the* Previous Diſcourſe, *where they are enumerated and painted in forming the grand argument.*]

Hence the imperial orders daily ſent into all parts, for the governours of provinces to deſtroy the chriſtians: here is a copy of one of them, preſerved in the *acts of the martyrs:* Decius *and* Valerian, *emperors, triumphers, conquerors, auguſt, pious,* ——— *Together with the whole ſenate—have decreed thus: Whereas we have received the gifts and bleſſings of the gods, by whom we enjoy victory over our enemies, as alſo temperate ſeaſons and fruits in great plenty and perfection; ſince we have found them our noble benefactors, and to ſupply us with things univerſally ſerviceable:* ——— *We therefore with one conſent enact, that all orders of men, as well children as ſervants, ſoldiers as private perſons, ſhall offer ſacrifice to the gods, doing reverence and ſupplication to them. And if any one ſhall dare to violate our divine command thus unanimouſly agreed upon, we order, that he be thrown into priſon, and afterwards put to ſeveral kinds of torture. If by this method he be reclaimed, he may expect no mean honours from us. But perſiſting in his contumacy, let him be beheaded, or thrown into the ſea,*

ſea, or caſt out to dogs and birds of prey: but eſpecially, if there be any found of the religion of the chriſtians. As for thoſe that obey decrees, they ſhall receive great honours and rewards from us. So happily fare ye well. And this was with ſuch vigour executed, they indeed believed the point was obtained, and raiſed triumphal arches to perpetuate their victory over chriſtianity: of which, theſe two inſcriptions found at *Clunia* in *Spain*, are a ſufficient evidence:

DIOCLESIANUS JOVIUS ET
MAXIMIAN. HERCULEUS
CAES. AUG.
AMPLIFICATO, PER ORIENTEM ET OCCIDENTEM,
IMP. ROM.
ET
NOMINE CHRISTIANORUM
DELETO, QUI REMP. EVERTEBANT.

The other,

DIOCLESIAN. CAES.
AUG. GALERIO IN ORIENTE ADOPT. SUPERSTITIONE CHRIST.
UBIQ. DELETA, ET CULTU DEOR. PROPAGATO.

The

The meaning of them is; that *Dioclesian* and his collegues had every where rooted out the christian superstition, so hurtful to the commonwealth, and re-established the worship of the gods with increase. Indeed the christians had a very hot service, and nobly they acquitted themselves: but of this I shall only relate the heroism of one more person.

They almost envy'd the martyrdom of others, grieving any so shewed their love, while *they* seemed to do nothing for Christ. When *Laurentius* the deacon spy'd *Sixtus* the bishop of Rome, going to his martyrdom, he fell o'crying, and passionately called out, *Whither art thou going, my father, without thy son? Whither so fast, O holy bishop, unattended by thy deacon? Never yet offer'dst thou spiritual sacrifice but thy minister waited on thee. Then hast thou found me degenerate and fearful? At least make trial whether thou hast chosen a fit attendant.* To this the bishop reply'd: *Mistake not, dear son; I do not leave thee, nor forsake thee* — whom *only a more fiery trial awaits. I like a weak old man, bear the first skirmishes of the battle; but thou, who art youthful and valiant, hast a costlier conquest reserv'd for Thee. Cease to weep. Thy turn comes presently; for within three days shalt thou follow me.* And so it was: For the governour knowing *Laurentius* to be the church's treasurer, laid hold on him, and commanded

manded him to deliver up the bank. The holy man aſked three days to gather it together; and on the third day preſented to the governour a great number of ſick, and of diſabled people, ſaying, *Here are the churches riches—towards God.* The rapacious judge had no patience at this diſappointment, but ordered him immediately to be torn with ſcourges, thongs headed with lead, and iron rods: then to be ſet upon the wooden horſe, and have all his limbs diſlocated. Laſt of all, the tyrant had him laid upon a gridiron with a ſlow fire under it, and broiled. With amazing ſuperiority St. *Laurence* endured all theſe torments; and after whizzing a while upon that bed of martyrdom, called to the governour, *I am done enough on this ſide; turn the other; and then you may eat me.* Now prayed the ſaint for the converſion of Rome, and yielded up his ſpirit to God.

End of the Second Part of Primitive Chriſtianity.

Primitive CHRISTIANITY.

PART III.

Of their religion as reſpecting others.

CHAP. I.

Of their juſtice and honeſty.

HAVING ſet forth ancient chriſtianity, both as it regarded their piety to God, and perſonal virtue; I come in the laſt place to conſider it in its influence on ſocial carriage: concerning which we ſhall notice theſe inſtances; *Their juſtice and integrity in buſineſs.* —— *Their love to one another, and univerſal charity.* — *Their concord and peaceableneſs.* —— *And their ſubmiſſion to civil government.*

One view of the chriſtian inſtitution is to eſtabliſh that extenſive principle: —— *To injure no man, but render to all their due.* And to give vigour to this great law of communication: ——— *All things whatſoever*

ever ye would, men ſhould do to you, make it your care ſo to do unto them: Than which, as no regulation could have been more equitable in itſelf, ſo none could have been contrived more ſhort and plain, or better adapted to all caſes in human life.

The chriſtians conſidered *honeſty without limitation*, as an inſeparable part of their religion. To ſpeak the truth, to keep their words, to act uprightly throughout their conduct, was dearer than their Beings to them. They ever practiſed the cleareſt ſimplicity in converſation, never pretending a thing that was falſe, and on no account diſſembling the truth. *Yes*, (and if there was occaſion to repeat) *yes*, and no, — no —— was their conſtant oral intercourſe. They thought a lye ſadly wicked in all, but quite an enormity in a chriſtian,——who had conſigned himſelf to the true God, Father, Son, and Holy Ghoſt: wherefore would they not utter an untruth to ſave all the ſouls in the world. The heathens charged them with madneſs and idiotiſm, to ſuffer ſuch deaths, when a parcel of fair words might bring them off, and mental reſervation ſalve their conſciences. But *Tertullian* let theſe dextrous caſuiſts know, the chriſtians heard ſuch a propoſal with the utmoſt horrour and indignation, as the plain artifice of the devil. To be put to their oath was a diſgrace to them. " How can one (ſays *Clemens Alexandrinus*) that

that is in the faith of the Saviour, want impreſſing by an oath? How is it he makes not the *tenor of his life* an affidavit?"

For this reaſon,——but more perſuaded by the miſtaken ſcripture, *ſwear not at all*, ſome of the fathers held *making Oath* unlawful: but beſides that theſe were not here conſtant to themſelves, by far the major part were of another mind. Indeed the conduct of our Lord, who anſwered upon oath, decides the queſtion. And that His followers did not ſcruple to be ſworn by a magiſtrate, is indubitable from their bearing arms under the emperors; which obliged 'em to take the military oath——— *To be true to their general, and die rather than deſert their ſtation.*

They were nice to the utmoſt about the reputation of a perſon, apter by much to increaſe than leſſen it. Says St. *Baſil* of *Gregory Thaumaturgus*, "Out of regard to the Lord's denunciation, he never dared call his brother-creature *fool*. No bitterneſs proceeded out of his mouth. He approached not the altar till reconciled to his fellow-man. Pride and envy were ſtrangers to that guiltleſs ſoul. Falſe and artificial ſpeeches, and ſuch as are contrived for detraction of others, deteſted he; *genuin child* of the Beſt of Beings, *Who hates all thoſe that ſpeaks lyes.*

The chriſtians could not give proof of their *diſtributive juſtice*, till the empire ſubmitted

mitted to THEIR MASTER, and then we find them executing their places with the moſt unbiaſt integrity. The above-cited *Baſil* reports of a perſon in high office, that he was a rigid obſerver of uprightneſs; eaſy of acceſs and affable to the oppreſt, but his preſence terrible to the injurious and all tranſgreſſors of the law: He was the ſame to poor and rich, equally at leiſure for both." And of another it is ſaid: He ſo acted juſtice himſelf and adminiſtered it to others, that though he went through very great offices in the ſtate, he added not a farthing to his own income.

In tranſactions between man and man, they in no ſort advantaged themſelves of unſkilfullneſs; not the ſmalleſt arts of recommendation were uſed:———but if the *maſk of chriſtianity* was plucked off a fraudulent dealer, ſuch a one was immediately proteſted againſt by the whole ſociety of chriſtians.

CHAP. II.

Of their admirable love, and charity.

LOVE founded, and love is the eſſence of chriſtianity. Now that this religion was deſigned to new-model our prin-

principles, appears particularly from this among other inſtances; it does with ſuch ſolemnity injoin, with ſuch energy promote that compaſſion, which is, perhaps, the moſt uſeful temper in mankind. Wherever the goſpel is really embraced, it creates ſuch a gracious diſpoſition, that we are humble, affable, courteous, charitable, ready to any good work, prompt to all offices of kindneſs and humanity. It files off the ruggedneſs of nature, or education, clears away a rude, churliſh, diſdainful bias, and infuſes a pliant, candid habit of ſoul. The goſpel commands us *to live and love as brethren* —— *To let love be without diſſimulation* —— *To be practitioners in fervent charity, kindly affectioned one towards another.* It ſums up ſocial duty in this; —— *To love our neighbour as ourſelves.* And the Lord claims this as his peculiar law, and with his own ſanction ratifies it: *A new commandment I give unto you, that you love one another; as I have loved you, that you alſo love one another.* And then makes it the badge of diſcipleſhip. —— *By this ſhall all men know you are my diſciples, if you have love one to another.*

So alſo was it with the firſt ages of this religion; for no ſooner flew the goſpel abroad, but chriſtian love became proverbial; the heathen thus noticing the followers of Jeſus; *ſee how theſe chriſtians love one another.* Cemented in the moſt happy

happy fellowſhip, they indeed lived like brethren really ſo endeared, and as ſuch regarded themſelves; not only being deſcended from one Father of mankind, but upon much higher accounts; as they had one and the ſame God for their Heavenly Father, drank all of the ſame Spirit of holineſs, were brought out of a like tomb of darkneſs into like ſplendor of truth; — partakers of the ſame precious faith, purchaſed by the Same Divine Blood —coheirs of a radiant immortality. Therefore never did they meet but they heartily embraced; ſaluting each other with a holy kiſs, not in their own houſes only, but at their religious meetings; an avowal of the chriſtian communion, that was ſteddily maintained among them.

For this affection evaporated not in careſſing behaviour, and ſoothing words; *I wiſh you warmed and filled*; but blazed in exhibitions of love and mercy. The two objects of ſocial charity are the ſouls of men, and their outward welfare. Now the primitive chriſtians laboured heartily for both. But the ſoul being infinitely more valuable than the body, they were immeaſurably ſolicitous to ſave mens ſouls, to recover them out of the *ſnare of the devil*, by bringing 'em *to the knowledge of the truth*: they were importunate with God to this end. "We (ſays *Cyprian* to the proconſul) ſerve the true, and one God Who made heaven and earth; and interceed with Him night

and day, not only for ourſelves, but for all men, and for the ſafety of the emperors." No injuries could ſlacken them in their courſe: they returned material ſervices for the moſt brutal aſſaults of hatred, and by the miſeries they were enabled to ſuſtain, ſhowed unto heathens the God-own'd way to heaven; crying to them, that now was the time to make peace with the Almighty, ſo ſecuring their ever-laſting ſalvation: that beyond the grave they ſhould find *no ſpace for repentance*, the ſtations of the next world being for ever unalterable: therefore it concerned them extremely to believe in the Son of God, and live in ſuch a manner, that they might eternally rejoice with thoſe, whom they now ſo perſecuted and afflicted.

This conſideration influenc'd greatly into the ſufferings of theſe martyrs, who with a good will run any hazards, gladly endur'd all tortures whatſoever, that they might gain perſons to the faith, and prevent their never-ending perdition. That famous ſtory of the apoſtle *John* ſhall ſerve inſtead of many.——Coming to a city near *Epheſus* (in the viſitation of his churches) ſome think *Smyrna*, he caſt his eyes upon a youth of excellent ſhape, and who had a lively look; and the apoſtle taking hold of him, delivered him to the biſhop of the place, with this charge twice repeated, *I commend this perſon to have vaſt care taken of him. And that in*

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the preſence of Chriſt and his church. The biſhop readily undertook the charge, received the young man into his houſe, inſtructed him, and at laſt baptized him. After which, as if that ſacrament would make him impregnable to temptations, he relaxed the ſtrictneſs of his attention. But the mettleſome youth abuſing his liberty, ſorted with evil company, by whom he was enſnared into all kinds of riot and wickedneſs: till deſpairing of pardon from God, he gave himſelf up to the utmoſt exorbitancy, and agreeing with his aſſociates, they combined into a band of highwaymen, and he was made their captain, who ſoon as far topped the reſt in fierceneſs and cruelty, as he was ſuperior in authority. St. *John* upon occaſion returning to the ſame place, when he had diſpatcht his other buſineſs, required from the biſhop the treaſure he had lodged in his hands: who being ſurprized and not knowing what the apoſtle meant; "*I mean* (ſays St. John) *the young man; it is the ſoul of my brother that I require.* The old prelate with a dejected look and tears in his eyes, anſwered, he is dead. *By what death,* (it is demanded.) *Dead to God* (reply'd the biſhop;) *for he is grown a villain alaſs, and inſtead of any regard to the church, is fled with his companions to be a robber in the mountains.* The apoſtle rending his cloaths and lamenting he had intruſted his brother to ſuch

a careleſs guardian, immediately took horſe and a guide and haſtened to the mountains; where being ſtopt by the centinels of the robbers, he begged to be brought before their captain; who ſtood ready-armed at ſome diſtance off; but ſoon as he perceived it was the apoſtle, he became confounded, and fled away. St. *John* not regarding his own age and weakneſs, followed him with all poſſible ſpeed; but when his legs fell weak, diſpatched after him theſe paſſionate exclamations, and his affection panted in the whiſtling wind; *Why, O my ſon, doſt thou fly from thy aged and unarmed father? take pity upon me, and fear thou not; there is yet hope of ſalvation for thee. I will undertake with Chriſt in thy behalf; if need require, I will freely die for Thee, as our dear Lord for us all, and lay down my life to ranſom thine. Stay but, and believe me, for I am ſent by Chriſt.* Upon which the young robber ſtopped; and with downcaſt eyes, throwing away his weapons, he trembled and melted into tears; — he embraced the aged evangeliſt with the utmoſt demonſtrations of mingled joy and concern, being as it were rebaptized with the flood from his own eyes. St. *John* aſſured him *he had obtained his pardon of Chriſt*, and having faſted and prayed with him and for him, and with the wiſe arts of conſolation refreſht his poor ſhattered mind, brought him into, and reſtored him to the church; leaving a moſt

moſt bright example of real love and compaſſion for precious endangered ſouls.

St. *Auguſtin* tells us, what pains his mother *Monica* took about the converſion of her huſband *Patricius*; how ſhe endeared herſelf to a humourſome and fiery man by her cheerful, meek, prudent carriage. When ſhe gave place to his moody whimſies, how ſhe watched the fitteſt times of inſinuation; never leaving, till at length ſhe won him to the faith. Nor was her love and ſolicitude leſs for her ſon *Auguſtin*, nay he was the ceaſeleſs ſubject of her prayers and tears. She ply'd him every day with counſels and intreaties, implored the aſſiſtance of good men, and importuned heaven for the ſucceſs of all; not admitting any quiet into her mind, till St. *Ambroſe* diſmiſſed her with this aſſurance; *that it was not poſſible a child of ſo many tears could periſh.* No ſooner was his converſion wrought, but her ſpirit was at eaſe, and ſhe deſired no more. Himſelf tells us, that diſcourſing with her a few days before her death, ſhe at laſt broke off with this farewel: *For my part, ſon, I have no further hopes in this world; there was but one thing I wiſh'd to live for; that I might ſee you a chriſtian; this my good God has abundantly bleſt me with; ſo what further Call remains for Me?*

Nay ſo great a zeal had they for the good of ſouls, that many did not ſtick to

involve themſelves in temporal ſlavery, for no other end but to deliver others from ſpiritual bondage. Thus *Serapion* ſold himſelf to a Gentile player, with whom he underwent the meaneſt offices, till he had converted him, his wife, and whole family to chriſtianity. Coming afterwards to *Lacedæmon*, and hearing that a principal perſon in the city, a very good man otherwiſe, was infected with the *Manichæan* hereſy; one of the firſt things he did was to ſell himſelf to be his ſlave; in which condition he remained two years, till he had brought his maſter and whole family off from that pernicious hereſy, and reſtored them to the church.

Having ſeen their ſolicitude for the ſouls, let us ſee how they cared for the bodies of others. They proved their concern in ſeveral inſtances. Diligent and abundant proviſion was made for the indigent, and thoſe who were incapable of helping themſelves. *Dionyſius* teſtifies of the church of *Rome*, that they not only eminently provided for their own poor, but liberally furniſhed to the occaſions of other churches; nor relieved diſtreſt brethren alone, and others, that came to them, but wherever they were, though at the greateſt diſtance. Indeed the bounties of theſe times almoſt ſurpaſſed belief. St. *Cyprian* when he was converted, ſold his eſtate to remove the neceſſities of others. *Nazianzen* reports of his father,

father, "He was ſo kind to the poor, that he not only beſtowed the overplus of his eſtate upon them, but even part of what was reſerved for neceſſary uſes:" Of his mother; "that an ocean of wealth would not have ſatisfy'd her thirſty deſire of doing good; and he had often heard her ſay, "If it were lawful, ſhe could willingly ſell herſelf and children, to expend the money upon the poor."

They gave not only anſwerable to, but indeed beyond their ability: truſting to the goodneſs of heaven to make the return; which it many times did with overplus, by ways uncommon and very wonderful. *Sozomen* relates of *Epiphanius*, biſhop of *Salamine* in *Cyprus*, that having ſpent all his patrimony in charitable uſes, ſuccouring the needy, and thoſe who were wrecked upon the coaſt;——he freely diſtributed the goods and treaſures of the church, and that ſo bountifully, that the treaſurer finding its ſtock begin to grow low, with ſome reſentment, told him of it; which notwithſtanding, the kind man relaxed nothing of his accuſtomed beneficence. At length, all being ſpent, a ſtranger on a ſudden enters the ſteward's lodgings, and delivers into his hands a great purſe of gold, without any diſcovery who ſent it, or who had brought it. The truth is, they then look'd upon the poor as the ornament and treaſure of the

church, by whom, as by bills of exchange, they returned their eſtates into the other world. This we ſaw in *Laurentius*'s example.

Next to this appeared their love in viſiting and aſſiſting the ſick, waſhing and refreſhing their tired bodies. St. *Hierom* relates of *Fabiola*, a *Roman* lady of conſiderable fortune; that ſhe ſold her eſtate, and dedicated the purchaſe-money to the uſes of the needy: ſhe built an hoſpital [the firſt who did ſo] in which ſhe kept the infirm and miſerable, or any poor ſhe met with in the ſtreets: Here was a whole rendezvous of cripples, hundreds of diſeaſes got together, and herſelf at hand to look to 'em; ſometimes carrying the ſick in her arms, or bearing them on her ſhoulders; ſometimes waſhing and dreſſing thoſe noiſome ſores, from which another would have turned with horror: otherwhile preparing their food, or adminiſtring phyſic with her own hand. Nay, they aſſiſted their brethren, when under diſtempers that breathed death in the face of the helper.

Thus in that terrible plague at *Alexandria*, which, though it was chiefly among the heathen, ſeized alſo upon the chriſtians: many of the brethren then (ſays the hiſtorian,) without regard to their life, out of the abundance of charity, boldly mix'd among the thickeſt dangers; daily viſiting,

viſiting, tending, inſtructing, comforting their infected ſick brethren, till themſelves expired with them. Nay, many that had been very ill, recovered, while their nurſes dy'd, as if by a ſtrange kind of love they had taken their diſeaſes upon them, and accepted death to ſave *them* from dying. Thus it went with the chriſtians, while the Gentiles, in the mean time, diveſted themſelves of all humanity: when any begun to ſicken among them, they forthwith caſt 'em out, ſhunned their deareſt friends and relatives, left them lying about in the high-ways, and neither living nor dead, paid the leaſt regard to them.

A third inſtance of chriſtian love (called by *Ambroſe* the higheſt piece of liberality,) was their care about perſons groaning in captivity; an ardent ſolicitude to hearten them under, to reſcue 'em from this doleful condition. Of *Acaſius*, biſhop of *Amida*, we read in *Socrates*, that when the *Roman* army had taken ſeven thouſand *Perſians* captive, and would neither releaſe 'em without a ranſom, nor yet give 'em food to ſuſtain their lives; this good biſhop with the conſent of his clergy, melted down all the gold and ſilver plate that belonged to his church, ranſom'd the poor men, fed them, and ſent 'em home to their prince: whom they amazed with an account of this charity, which ſhowed him

the *Romans* knew how to conquer by kindneſs, as well as by force of arms.

Very great love was this; yet we meet with ſtranger in the primitive church: "*There are many of our acquaintance* (ſays *Clemens* to the *Corinthians*,) *who have delivered themſelves into bonds, that they might reſtore others to dear liberty; and there are thoſe who have hired themſelves to ſervice, to ſupport a poor body with their wages.*" Under the *Vandalic* perſecution, numbers of chriſtians were carried ſlaves out of *Italy* into *Africa*; for whoſe redemption when *Paulinus* biſhop of *Nola* had expended his whole eſtate; there comes to him at laſt a widow, intreating him to give her as much as would ranſom her only ſon, then ſlave to the king of the *Vandals* ſon-in-law. He told her he had not one penny left, nothing but his perſon, and that he freely gave her to make the beſt of. This from one of *Paulinus*'s rank, ſeemed to the woman a deriſion, not commiſeration of her calamity: but he proteſted he meant what he ſaid, and at length induced her to believe him. Whereupon they took ſhip together for *Africa*. At which place arriving, the prelate addreſs'd himſelf to the prince, implored the captive's releaſe, and offered his own perſon in the room. The propoſal being accepted, the widow had her ſon, and *Paulinus* became the prince's gardener. He afterwards ingratiated himſelf with his maſter,

ter, and diſcovered his quality to him. The noble-minded prince, who felt ſo great an action, ſet him at liberty, and bid him aſk what he would. *Then I entreat, Sir*, (ſays the biſhop,) *the releaſe of my countrymen here in ſlavery*. It was accordingly granted, and all ſent joyful home, their ſhips laden with corn and proviſions.

Of the loving-ſpirit of theſe times, there remains yet a material circumſtance, and that is, its univerſality. *To all did they good, although more eſpecially to the houſehold of faith*. Their bounty was not unſinewed by providing only for a party, but extended its arms to a compaſſionable object, wherever ſuch preſented itſelf. They were kind to all men, yea their bittereſt enemies, and that with a charity, both reviving and large as the circles of the ſun, which viſits all corners of the world, and ſhines upon the ſtinking dunghill, as glorioufly as upon a pleaſant garden. In reverſe of what has been ſaid, "*Thou ſhalt love thy neighbour and hate thine enemy*," our Divine Redeemer teaches, *Love your enemies, bleſs them that curſe you, do good to them that hate you, pray for thoſe who deſpitefully uſe you and perſecute you.*" It is the nature of all men to love their friends, but the peculiarity of chriſtians to advantage their enemies. In the firſt times of *Conſtantine*, the army being near ſtarved for want of proviſions, and coming to a city chiefly

chiefly inhabited by chriſtians, received a frank ſupply of whatever they had occaſion for. One of the heathen ſoldiers (*Pachomius* by name,) was aſtoniſht at ſuch a charity, and at the ſame time told that the donors were *The Chriſtians*; the butts of ill treatment, yet whoſe religion it was—*to hurt no man, and do good to all men*; reflecting upon this, he threw away his arms, and embraced the ſevereſt auſterities of religion. One or two more inſtances, I hope, wont tire the reader. *Euſebius* ſpeaking of that dreadful plague and famine under *Maximinus* in the *Eaſt*, when ſo many entire families were ſwept away at once; *adds*; that at this time the tenderneſs of the chriſtians towards all, evidently appeared to the heathens round about; ſome of whom acknowledged them to be the only perſons, who performed the offices of mercy and humanity; partly in ordering and burying the dead, (about multitudes of whom no care was taken;) partly in aſſembling all the ſtarving poor, and giving a portion of bread to every one of them: The fame of which filled the mouths of all men; who glorified the God of the chriſtians. Indeed the charity was more remarkable, becauſe the chriſtians were then ſtruggling with a moſt heavy perſecution.

In the reign of *Gallus* and *Voluſian*, there was a plague throughout the world for fifteen years, more or leſs, eſpecially in *Carthage*;

thage; where multitudes expired every day: the ſtreets were obſtructed with the remains of the dead, which challenged help from the living by the law of humanity. But every one fled trembling to ſhift for himſelf. Men deſerted their neareſt relations, none ſtaying, except to riſle the unpeopled dwellings. In this calamitous ſituation *Cyprian* the biſhop calls the chriſtians together, inſiſts upon the univerſal extent of mercy *in due exerciſe*, admoniſhes them, it was no wonder charity flowed to our own people; but the way of perfection is to do beyond the heathens; and, if poſſible, to *overcome evil with good.*" Immediately they agreed upon aſſiſting their common enemies, every perſon according to his rank lending help: thoſe who could not, for poverty, bear part in the expence, gave their labour, an aſſiſtance beyond all other contributions. From which exceeding charity, great advantage accrued not to themſelves alone, but univerſally to all.

CHAP.

CHAP. III.

Of their unity and peaceableneſs.

WHEN Chriſt inſtituted a religion on earth, the law He gave was correſpondent to His Nature, — the intent of His coming into the world,—the exerciſe of His government as *Prince of Peace*; a law of gentleneſs, forbearance, and reciprocal compliance. We are commanded to *follow peace with all men*; —— *to purſue the things that make for peace*; —— *as much as in us lies, to live peaceably with the world.* We are upon high penalties forbid upbraidings and quarrels; are injoined *not to take revenge, but give place to wrath*; ——*to let all anger, clamour, bitterneſs, and evil-ſpeaking be put away from us, with all malice*; ——*to be kind one to another, tender-hearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Chriſt's ſake has freely forgiven us.*

Before our Lord's appearance, the world was over-run with diviſions, reciprocal animoſity burning in *Jews* and *Gentiles*; the *Jews* regarded the *Gentiles* as dogs and outcaſts, refuſed all dealings with them, even ſuch a civility as to *tell a man his way*, —— *or give him a draught of water.* They reproached them as the vileſt of mortals: their ſtyle towards 'em was——*Sinners of*

of the Gentiles. Nor leſs ſupremely the Gentiles ſcorned and derided the Jews, —— for a contemptible generation; ſtopping their noſes and abhorring the very ſight of them, if by chance they met 'em. They looked upon them as enemies of all the earth, that did not ſo much as wiſh well to any people, but were haters of mankind: for *ſo Tacitus*, and *ſo* their adverſaries (in *Joſephus*) repreſent them. The conſequence of which was; they oppreſſed and abuſed them all the world over, trod them under foot as dirt, till at laſt come the Romans, and deciſively take away their place and almoſt their nation. Thus ſtood the caſe, when the Prince of peace came: who partly by his death which demoliſhed the partition-wall, partly by the healing tendency of His doctrine, pacified theſe mutual animoſities, and ſilenced the paſſionate diviſions among men.

How greatly, by beating down pride, fury, luſt, avarice, cruelty, the religion of Jeſus promoted the public tranquility, *Juſtin* ſets forth to the emperors. "As for peace (ſays he,) we above all men compaſs it——by teaching that no wicked man, no covetous, or treacherous perſon, and no virtuous man, can be covered from the eyes of God; but each perſon according to his works, is travelling on to a never-ending happineſs or miſery. Did but all men believe this, not one could dare

dare for a few moments to give up himſelf to vice and wickedneſs, perſuaded it would land him in ever-laſting fire. No! by any, and by all means, he *muſt* reſtrain himſelf, neceſſarily muſt maintain ſobriety, and a pious as well as beneficent conduct; and ſo, through grace, eſcape the puniſhment, and obtain the reward, of eternity."

We have ſeen the chriſtians demeanour to them who were without: within themſelves they kept up the moſt beautiful harmony; a body of people animated with one ſoul. All diſſenſion was avoided like a firebrand and the plague. But as men are not equal in underſtanding, nor all truths alike evident to each, differences in opinion did of neceſſity ariſe: yet ſtill no ſchiſm in fundamentals ever ſtarted up, but it was lamented deeply by all good men, and the breach with promptitude attempted to be cloſed. When *Novatus* (or rather *Novatian)* had made ſome diſturbance in the church of *Rome*, with regard to receiving the *lapſed* into communion; the biſhop of *Alexandria* writes to him, to extinguiſh the ſchiſm; telling him, It is far better to endure any thing, than that the church of God ſhould be rent into pieces; that greater is the glory of dying to keep diviſions out of the church, than for avoiding the adoration of idols: ſince in the one inſtance a man does upon his own account reſiſt unto blood; but in the other

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is a martyr for the whole chriſtian community."

It is evident from all the writers of thoſe times, what a black mark they ſet upon ſchiſm, how they laboured to reconcile diſſenting brethren, and put a good end to controverſies; with how much prudence they eſtabliſhed concord among themſelves, and prevented all the occaſions of diſunion. Perſons going from one place to another, were furniſhed with canonical letters: of theſe there were eſpecially three ſorts. —— Firſt, *commendatory epiſtles* [Συστατικαὶ,] mentioned by St. *Paul*. They were granted by the biſhop to clergymen paſſing into a new dioceſe, teſtifying their ordination, ſoundneſs in the faith, unblameableneſs of life. They were beſtowed indeed upon all who travelled, being tickets of hoſpitality, that upon producing theſe letters, they might be entertained where-ever they came: a method *Julian* admired in the chriſtian conſtitution, and endeavoured to introduce in his own pagan reformation. The ſecond ſort were *letters diſmiſſory* [Ἀπολυτικαι;] through which perſons might be ordained by the biſhop of another place, or if ordained already, be incorporated into the clergy of that church. The third were *letters of peace* [Εἰρηνικαὶ] iſſued from the biſhop to the poor that were aggrieved, and ſuch as fled to the church for its protection and aſſiſtance.

By

By theſe expedients the wiſdom of thoſe times preſerved the union of believers; — and where differences of importance fell out, quickly they flocked together to compoſe and heal them.

Nor did there want peaceable-minded men, who preferred the public tranquility to any private advantage. When in reference to the See of *Conſtantinople* (then poſſeſſed by *Gregory Nazianzen*,) great conteſts were raiſed by ſome reſtleſs perſons, —— that good prelate ſtood up himſelf in the midſt of the aſſembly and told the biſhops, it was very unſeemly that the preachers of peace to others, ſhould quarrel among themſelves; begged of them to manage their affairs calmly and gently: and if I (ſays he) am the *Jonas* that raiſes this ſtorm, do what you will with me, only let theſe ſcandalous bickerings ceaſe. I will willingly undergo any thing, and though unblameable, yet for the quiet of the church, am content to leave *Conſtantinople:* Only, according to the prophet's counſel, be careful to love peace and truth." And with that he freely reſigned his biſhopric, though ſettled therein by the expreſs command of the emperor, and the univerſal deſires and acclamations of the people.

Men moſt zealous concerning the main articles of faith, tolerated one another in the rituals of religion, without any violation

tion of love, which is the great law of chriſtianity. Thus in that famous controverſy about the keeping of Eaſter, ſo much agitated between the eaſtern and the weſtern churches, *Irenæus*, in a letter to pope *Victor*, tells him, that former biſhops, however they differed in obſerving it, always lived in fellowſhip with one another; the churches being careful to maintain a peaceable communion, though not judging alike in ſome particular rites and ceremonies. When *Polycarp* came to *Rome* from the churches of the eaſt, to treat with pope *Anicetus* about this, though neither was enough ſatisfied to yield the controverſy, yet they kiſſed and embraced each other, received the holy communion together; and *Anicetus* (to do greater honour to *Polycarp*) gave him leave to conſecrate the elements in his church; and at laſt they parted in entire peace and friendſhip. Too deep had "*Love one another as* "*I have loved you*" ſunk into theſe chriſtians, for them to jar about a matter of form. They forgave, and really loved their enemies; much more forbore they, and loved their brethren. Chriſtians were repugnant to giving or taking offence; but kept an unbroken peace with God and man. Hence that edifying ſpeech of *Ephraim Syrus* the celebrated deacon of *Edeſſa*, when he came to die; "*In my whole life I never reproached my Lord and Maſter*,

Maſter, nor ſuffered any fooliſh talk to come out of my lips; nor did I ever curſe or revile any man, or maintain the leaſt controverſy or difference with any chriſtian in all my life.

CHAP. IV.

Of their obedience and ſubjection to civil government.

IN many inſtances has been manifeſted, how much the goſpel-doctrines tranſcribed into the life, eſtabliſh the proſperity of mankind. Now government being the great ſupport of external peace and happineſs, we ſhall in the laſt place, conſider the firſt chriſtians remarkable ſubjection to civil government. They paid an exemplary obedience to the magiſtrates under whom they lived; revering their authority, honouring their perſons, paying them tribute, obeying their laws, when conſiſtent with thoſe of Chriſt; and when not, ſuffering the cruelleſt penalties with an unembittered mind.

The truth is; one grand view of the chriſtian law, is to ſecure the intereſts of the State. Our Lord's command runs —— *Render unto Cæſar the things that are Cæſar's.* And His inſpired apoſtles ſpeak

ſpeak point-blank — *Let every ſoul be ſubject to the higher powers; for there is no power but of God: the polities ſubſiſting are ordained of God. Whoſoever therefore withſtands the power, does reſiſt the ordinance of God, and reſiſters ſhall receive to themſelves damnation. Wherefore you muſt needs be ſubject, not only for wrath, but alſo for conſcience-ſake. Since, upon this account, pay you tribute alſo; for they are God's meſſengers, attending continually on this very thing. Render therefore to all — their dues; tribute to whom tribute is due; fear to whom fear, honour to whom honour:* where both the ſtrictneſs and univerſality of the charge is obſervable, and given under the emperor *Nero*, who was ſo prodigiouſly brutiſh and tyrannical, that the world hardly ever produced ſuch a monſter; a beaſt in a beautiful human ſhape.

Nor expired this excellent ſpirit with the apoſtles; we find the ſame temper ruling in ſubſequent times. "The chriſtians (ſays an ancient) obey the laws in being, and by their virtue improve upon the good behaviour therein required. They ſhow ſubſtantial love to all men, while all men make a point of afflicting them." *Athenagoras* thus concludes his addreſs to the emperors: "Are there any more devoted to you, O ſovereign lords, than we chriſtians; who make continual prayers for the happineſs of your government, that

accordin g

according to right and equity, the ſon may ſucceed his father in the empire?——. That your dominions may be free from foes foreign and domeſtic?——And your enterprizes lawfully undertaken, be proſperouſly executed? And this we do, as what comprizes both your advantage and ours; that ſo, under you, leading ſerene lives, we may with double alacrity obey your ordinances."

A little before martyrdom, *Polycarp* wrote to the chriſtians at *Philippi*, with pathetic force preſſing them to obey their governours, and exerciſe all long-ſuffering towards them. And before the proconſul he ſaid, "This is a great inſtitute of chriſtianity;——to give all due honours to princes and the ruling powers; ſuch as is not prejudicial to us; that is; (for ſo, doubtleſs, he means) ſuch as is not contrary to the principles of our religion."

Tertullian reports it to have been a ſolemn part of the church-ſervice, to beſeech of God the proſperity of the government. "*We* (ſays he) *make interceſſion for the emperors, for the miniſters of ſtate, and to obtain quietneſs of affairs. We pray for a long life, a ſecure reign, an undiſturbed houſe, powerful armies, faithful ſenators, honeſt ſubjects, a peaceable people —— to our rulers, and indeed whatever they can wiſh for either as emperors or men. Whoever imagines we do not concern ourſelves for the*

the ſafety of princes, let him take a view of the commands of God revealed in the ſcriptures, which we freely exhibit and commend to the peruſal of all. For there are we obligated to interceed with God for our enemies and perſecutors; and who ſo much that, as they?——But it is a precept beyond evaſion, and without exception——to pray for kings, for princes, and all that are in authority, that the State may be peaceful and proſperous.

For your taxes and tributes, O noble emperors (ſays *Juſtin Martyr*) we are, above all other men, every where ready to bring them in: *thus Cæſar receives from us the things of Cæſar.* But we worſhip no one beſides the Maker of heaven and earth; for *we render unto God the things that are God's.* For you: in all proper matters we ſerve you with delight, acknowledging you governours of men, and petitioning the ſupreme power, that, with your imperial authority, you may have a wiſe and diſcerning judgment and underſtanding."

Nor only in proſperous times thus behaved they, but when grappling with the fury of perſecutors. *Cyprian* tells the proconſul, that bad as they were uſed, their prayers fainted not for the expulſion of the enemy, for ſeaſonable ſhowers, for the removal, or the mitigation, of public evils."

And

And they were not thus ſubmiſſive and ſweet-tempered, becauſe they could not help themſelves. *Tertullian* enforces upon this head, "That if they judged it lawful to return evil for evil, they could in one night with a few firebrands, take a plentiful revenge. We are not, however, (ſays he,) a diminutive inconſiderable party, that needs the arts of a ſkulking retaliation; but are able to appear in the rank and ſtate of open enemies: though but of yeſterday's ſtanding, we have filled all places, all offices of your empire; and what wars cannot we manage, who are ſo willing to reſign our lives? Nay, it is not even neceſſary to take up arms; for our body is ſo numerous, that ſhould we only agree together to leave your dominions, and go into ſome remote quarter of the world, the loſs of ſo many ſubjects would utterly ruin you, and you'd ſtand aghaſt at that ſolitude and deſolation that would enſue."

Yet they were accuſed of ſedition and forming unlawful combinations: which took riſe from their religious aſſemblies, by ſome thought contrary to the Roman laws. Hence *Pliny* giving the emperor an account of the chriſtians, eſpecially of their ſolemn Lovefeaſts, acquaints his imperial majeſty, that he had publiſhed an edict to forbid the *heteriæ* or ſocieties.

But

But to this the chriſtians reply'd: "Their meetings could not be ranked among the factions, having nothing common with them. That indeed were the chriſtian aſſemblies like others, there would be cauſe to condemn them under the notion of conſpiracies: but to whoſe prejudice did we ever come together? We are the ſame in aſſembly, as when aſunder; the ſame aſſociated, as in each individual perſon; creating grievance to no man, prejudicing no creature; and when ſuch honeſt perſons meet, it is not a combination, but a council."

You charge us with treaſon (ſays *Tertullian*;) yet never could any *Albinians*, *Nigrians*, or *Caſſians*, who have indeed been riotous and have rebelled, be found among the chriſtians. They are of the number that ſwears by the emperor's genius, that has preſented ſacrifices for his ſafety, —theſe are the perſons found traytors to his imperial majeſty. A chriſtian is the enemy of no one, far leſs of his prince; for knowing him ſet in his high place by God, he cannot but honour and revere him, deſiring that he and the whole *Roman* empire may be ſafe, as long as the world laſts.

CHAP. V.

Of the diſcipline of the ancient church.

ONE thing yet remains; not properly reducible under any particular head: To conſider the diſcipline uſed towards offenders in this ancient church: only premiſing, that the church being eſtabliſhed by Chriſt as a ſociety, diſtinct from the worldly one of the commonwealth, is by the nature of *a conſtitution*, inveſted with an inherent power of cenſuring its members that tranſgreſs; for without ſuch authority to inforce its laws, it is impoſſible that as a ſociety it ſhould be able to ſubſiſt. Now for the better underſtanding this power, what it was, and how exerciſed, we ſhall conſider —— the uſual crimes that came under church-diſcipline —— the penalties inflicted upon delinquents —— the manner in which they were treated —— and by whom this diſcipline was adminiſtered.

The offences were any matters againſt the law of Chriſt, any vice or immorality, either public from itſelf, or made known to the church: for thoſe chriſtians were infinitely careful to keep their honour unſully'd, to ſtifle every ſin in its infancy, and by bringing tranſgreſſers to public ſhame,

ſhame, prevent the propagation of a bad example. For this reaſon they watched over one another, gave private admonition of a fault, but when that did not ſucceed, delated the offender to the church. Needleſs it is to count particular crimes, when none were ſpared. Only becauſe from the violent heats of perſecution, the temptation of weaker chriſtians was to deny their profeſſion; therefore lapſing into idolatry was the common offence that came before them. This renunciation of Chriſt by idol-worſhip, was generally committed one of theſe three ways: Sometimes in expoſing the ſcriptures to the malice of their enemies, —— and this was reputed a virtual renouncing of chriſtianity; which ſin was diſtinguiſhable under the perſecution in *Africa*; for *Dioclefian* had put forth an edict, that chriſtians ſhould give up their bibles to be burned: this command was executed with great fierceneſs, and many chriſtians to ward the ſtorm delivered their bibles: hence they were ſtiled *betrayers* (traditores,) with whom the orthodox refuſing to join after the perſecution, gave birth to that unhappy ſect of *Donatiſts*, which ſo much exerciſed the church. But another while chriſtians incurred idolatry by actual ſacrificing, or worſhipping of idols. Theſe were called *Thurificati*, becauſe they had burnt incence (*Thus* is *Latin* for incenſe)

upon the altars of the heathen deities. Others fell into this ſin by corrupting the magiſtrate, and taking of him a private licenſe, to exempt them from the penalty of the law, and the neceſſity of ſacrificing.

The puniſhments inflicted upon delinquents — could be no other than were agreeable to the nature of the church, which being purely ſpiritual and tranſacting only *ſuch* matters, could impoſe none but ſpiritual puniſhments. The apoſtles indeed inflicted bodily judgments upon offenders, as *Peter* towards *Ananias* and *Sapphira*, ſtriking them dead upon the place; and as *Paul* puniſhing the malicious *Elymas* with blindneſs: and this the latter apoſtle doubtleſs means by his delivering men over to ſatan; for no ſooner were they excommunicated, but ſatan ſeized upon them, and by actual poſſeſſing, or ſome other ſign, made appear they were come under his power. This could not but ſtrike with a mighty terror,—and made people ſtand in awe of the cenſures of the church. To-be-ſure the main deſign of providence in this extraordinary gift, was to ſupply the defect of civil power, of which the church was then wholly deſtitute. How long this miraculous ability laſted, I know not. The common penalty was ſuſpenſion from church-communion; the cutting off a delinquent as a rotten member, till, being by repentance and

and wholſome diſcipline healed, he was re-admitted into church-fellowſhip.

It has been noted, that this excommunication laſted abundance of years, if the crime was very great; or even for the offender's life: nay there were caſes in which it was not taken off at death, but perſons were left to the judgment of God, without any teſtimony of their reconciliation to the church.—— Though this ſeverity was mitigated, not only by private biſhops, but by the great council of *Nice*; which ordained, that penitents ſhould not be deny'd communion at the hour of death. If the delinquent was in orders, he forfeited his miniſtry; and though on repentance he was admitted to communion, yet he received the ſacrament only as a lay-perſon, never recovering the honour of his office.

Indeed they ſtrove all ways to diſcourage ſin, never thinking the curb ſtrong enough; ſo that by ſome the penalty was carried too far, and all pardon deny'd the ſinner. This *doctrine of deſpair*, if not broached, was further inforced by the *Novatian* party. For *Novatus*, *Cyprian*'s preſbyter, being ſuſpended by him for his vile enormities, fled over to *Rome*, where he joined himſelf *to Novatian*, a preſbyter of that church; (the two names are frequently confounded by the Greek writers.) This latter aſpired to the biſhop-

ric, and ſought to thruſt *Cornelius* out of that ſee, but not being able to compaſs his deſign, between them they ſtarted this among other hereſies; that thoſe who for fear of ſuffering had lapſt into idolatry, were not upon any repentance whatſoever, receivable again into the church; thus leaving them to the judgment of God.

Now this was *the manner in which tranſgreſſers were dealt with:* at their public aſſemblies (we find in *Tertullian*;) amongſt other parts of their holy exerciſes, there were exhortations, reproofs, and a divine cenſure: for the judgment is *then* given with great weight, as proceeding from thoſe who are ſure God beholds what they do: and it is the higheſt forerunner of judgment to come, when a perſon is baniſhed from prayers, communion at the Lord's table, and from all holy converſation. The martyrs did indeed in the caſe of the *lapſed*, receive ſome of them into private communion, having reaſon to think well of their penitence: but to a public participation they never were admitted, till they had accompliſhed the diſcipline of the church: which conſiſted in acts of mortification and repentance, more or leſs, according to the nature of the crime.

During this their ſpace of penance,—— they appeared in all the formalities of ſorrow

ſorrow and mourning, in a ſordid and ſquallid habit, with a ſad countenance, and a head hung down, with tears in their eyes, ſtanding without at the church-doors, (for they were not ſuffered to go in,) falling upon their knees to the miniſters as they entered, and begging the prayers of all good chriſtians in their doleful ſtate, with every expreſſion and demonſtration of a ſorrowful and dejected mind. Without this, neither riches nor dignity could procure any re-admiſſion into the church.

Theodoſius the Great, for his ſlaughter of the *Theſſalonians*, was by St. *Ambroſe* biſhop of *Milan* ſuſpended, brought to public confeſſion, and forced to undergo a ſevere courſe of penance for eight months together; when, after the ſtrongeſt demonſtrations of a hearty ſorrow and ſincere repentance, not more rigidly impoſed by the prelate, than readily accepted by the penitent, after his uſual proſtrations in public, as unworthy either to ſtand or kneel, crying out in *David*'s phraſe, *My ſoul cleaves to the duſt, quicken thou me according to thy word*, after having torn his hair, beat his forehead, watered his cheeks with tears, and humbly implored pardon and peace, —— he was abſolved and reſtored to communion with the church. Such ſeverity was partly to deter others; but principally to give God

and

and his church ſatisfaction, concerning the depth of the offenders repentance. Hence in the writings of thoſe times, theſe penances are ſo often ſtyled *ſatisfactions*: for whenever the early fathers uſe this word, 'tis either with reſpect to men or to God; *if to men*, — the meaning is, that by theſe acts of extreme outward ſorrow, they convinced the church of their internal penitence, and made reparation for the ſcandal of their ſins. *If to God*,—then 'tis taken for the acknowledgment of a man's fault, and the begging of pardon and remiſſion.

The time of penance being ended, they addreſſed themſelves to the governours of the church for abſolution. Hereupon their repentance was taken into examination; and being found, as far as could be judged, real and deep, they were openly readmitted into the church, by the impoſition of the hands of the clergy: the party to be abſolved kneeling down between the knees of the biſhop, or, in his abſence, of the preſbyter, who laying his hand upon the head of the party, ſolemnly bleſſed and abſolved him.

The penitent when pardoned, was received with the univerſal joy of the people, as one returned from the ſtate of the dead; being embraced by his brethren, who bleſſed God for his re-inſtatement: And many times they wept for delight of his recovery.

The

The ſpace of theſe penitentiary humiliations varied according to circumſtances; as it was in the biſhop's power to ſhorten the time, and take the perſon ſooner into communion. A learned man has obſerved four caſes in which they anticipated the abſolution: the firſt was—when the penitent was in danger of death. The ſecond —in time of imminent perſecution, that the perſons being made one with the church, might be better enabled to contend earneſtly for the faith. A third caſe was — when multitudes were invelopt, or ſuch men concerned, as were like to draw numbers after them: in this circumſtance, they thought it prudent and reaſonable to deal by ſomewhat milder methods, leſt holding them down to terms of rigour, they ſhould provoke them to fly off to the heretics, or to the heathens. Laſtly in mitigating the ſeverity of penance, they had reſpect to the perſon of the penitent, — his dignity — or age — or laborious courſe of paſt life — or infirmities: ——Sometimes they conſidered the greatneſs of his abaſement, and the impreſſion his ſtate of humiliation made upon him.

So wiſely did the piety of thoſe times deal with offenders, neither letting the reins ſo looſe as to encourage any man unto ſin, not yet holding them ſo ſtrait as to drive men into deſpair.

The

The final and *fourth* circumſtance is concerning the miniſters of this diſcipline. Now though it is true, that the affair was managed in the public congregation, and ſeldom or never performed without the conſent of the people, yet was it ever accounted a miniſterial act, properly belonging to perſons in orders.

While the number of chriſtians was ſmall, biſhops executed this and other parts of their office in their own perſons. But about the time of the *Decian* perſecution, when Chriſt's followers were vaſtly multiply'd, and the number of the lapſed great, it ſeemed good to the prudence of the church to appoint a public penitentiary (ſome holy, grave, and wiſe preſbyter,) whoſe office it was to receive the confeſſion of thoſe ſins, which perſons had committed after baptiſm, and by prayers, faſtings, and other exerciſes of mortification, to prepare them for abſolution. He was a ſort of *Cenſor Morum*, to inquire into the Lives of chriſtians, take a ſtrict account of their actions, and to direct and diſpoſe them to repentance. This office continued ſome centuries, till it was abrogated by *Nectarius*, St. *Chryſoſtom*'s predeceſſor in the ſee of *Conſtantinople*.

But beſides the ſtanding function of the clergy, we find even ſome of the laity, the martyrs and confeſſors, who had a conſiderable hand in abſolving penitents, and reſtoring

reſtoring them to communion with the church. As the chriſtians of thoſe times conceived a mighty reverence for martyrs, ſo the martyrs took upon them to diſpenſe remiſſion in extraordinary caſes; ſince (as has been remarkt) it was cuſtomary for ſuch as had lapſt out of fear, to addreſs to the impriſoned confeſſors, who frequently mitigated their penance, and by a note under their hands, ſignified their action to the biſhop.

Beſides theſe tablets granted by the martyrs, there were other *Libelli* given by heathen magiſtrates, whence the lapſed who had them were called *Libellatici*; and they were of ſeveral kinds:

Some writing their names, and profeſſing themſelves to worſhip the gods of the heathen, preſented the note to the magiſtrate; and theſe really ſacrificed, polluting not only their ſouls, but hands and lips.

Others there were, who did not themſelves preſent any ſuch note, but ſome heathen friends for them; and were thereupon releaſed out of priſon, and had the favour not to be urged to ſacrifice.

A third kind finding the keenneſs of their judges taken off with a ſum of money, freely owned to them they were chriſtians, and could not ſacrifice, praying them to iſſue out to 'em a tablet of diſmiſſion; for which they would make them a gratification. Theſe were moſt properly ſtyled

Libellatici

Libellatici and *Libellati*. Though not altogether ſo bad as the *Sacrificati*, *Cyprian* charges theſe with implicit idolatry, having defiled their conſciences by the purchaſe of the tablets, and by conſent acquieſced in that, which others had actually done.

And now having taken this view of the diſcipline in the ancient church, nothing remains but to admire and imitate their piety, their hatred of ſin, their care and zeal to keep up that ſtrictneſs of manners, which had rendered their religion ſo renowned and triumphant in the world. A diſcipline which were it reſettled in its due power and vigour, how happy would it ſucceed to the great chriſtian community. And this is particularly the judgment and deſire of our own church. *In the primitive church* (ſays the preface to the commination) *there was a godly diſcipline*; *that at the beginning of Lent, ſuch perſons as ſtood convicted of notorious ſins, were put to open penance, and puniſht in this world, that their ſouls might be ſaved in the day of the Lord, and others admoniſht by their example, ſhould be the more afraid to offend.—Which ſaid diſcipline it is much to be wiſht might be reſtored again.*

Now *Calviniſts* (as in general they do) may *cant* away; but we ſhall know the tree by its fruits.——Oh may the God of all grace give them no longer to divide the *Church* by horrible opinions, but rather to edify it by holy examples.

Final

Final Concluſion.

Reader, is thy ſoul foreign to this religion? Ah Why, why haſt thou deny'd thy life? The all-gladdening ſun, and the comfort of every *animal* ſenſation—drop, in reſpect to thee, together with thy body, in the grave. And now thy naked ſpirit ſtands before the ſupreme infinite Being, *whoſe production* from nothing thou, O careleſs creature, waſt. Give account of thy various abilities to thy God. "*I relieved one and another perſon. When the deiſt attacked the chriſtian faith, I exerted zeal and talents in its defence.*" Thus far was well. But pride thou hadſt immeaſurable. Thy time thou laidſt out upon trifling company. And inſtead of taking up a daily croſs, thou pamperedſt every one of thy ſenſes, full as much as prudence permitted,—thinking it went bad with thee, when by no Means thou couldſt. Now moreover; thou mightſt have read in my word, *Curſed is every one, that continueth not in all things, that are written in the book of the law, to do them.*—It ariſing hence, that thou waſt under an inevitable curſe, I propoſed My Only Son unto thee, that thou, made ſenſible of thy guilt and much imperfection, mightſt by faith ſhelter in the hole of that rock of ages, and clad with an all-perfect righteouſneſs be pleaſant in mine eyes, which are far

purer than to endure any iniquity. Why art thou not thus array'd? Miſerable ſpirit, I need not wait thy anſwer. That proud breaſt would not be *diſarrayed* of ſelf-righteouſneſs: thy naked truſt thou wouldſt not place in That Redeemer, Whom I had appointed for *thee*. Wherefore My Self Who did make thee, will ſhow thee no ſort of favour. Depart from Me. Depart from happineſs.

PRAYER.

O my Lord, be it not ſo. Let duſt and aſhes interpoſe, like *Moſes* in the gap, between this ſoul and thy righteous award. May the preſent terror and anguiſh be ſalutary; not the forerunners of terror and anguiſh, that paſs all expreſſion, becauſe they paſs all limited duration. O that no one of Thy immortal creatures might go, not ſavingly awakened, from this reading. So ſhalt Thou, glorious God and Father, correſpond to the motions of Thy grace, which excited the feebleſt of all Thy happy children, unto ſuch a labour of love. The praiſe of which ſhall ſound from the choir of glorified perſons and bleſſed Spirits, *purely to Thee* in Thy Son Jeſus Chriſt: for Whoſe alone ſake we ſupplicate the favour; —to Whom with Thee, O moſt gracious Father, and with Thee, O moſt dear Spirit of holineſs, — now riſe from all intellec-

tual

tual creatures, as in heaven, ſo on earth, undivided and everlaſting Praiſes, Honour, Love, unto the uttermoſt.

The E N D.

POSTCRIPT.

I wrote the following ſtanzas for my private uſe on Sundays; which I have here inſerted, as it is thought they may prove of general ſervice.

VERSES for the LORD's-DAY.

1. THE Lord is riſen.—Lively ſound!
See death unſtung, quaſht grave.
The Lord is riſen.—Peace, abound;
Mighty is Chriſt to ſave.

2. Jeſus, my bleeding only love,
When ſhall Thy ſaint be free?
—When ſhall I tune that ſong *Above*,
Slain Lamb of God, to Thee?

3. O patient Maſter, form my heart,
Shine on my brow, ſerene.
Nor be I urgent to depart;
High wiſdom ſhifts the ſcene.

4. With-

4. Without dear Jeſu's dying woes,
His Thought-o'er-whelming love,
None ever, *ſelf-abhorring*, roſe
And ſeiz'd the realms above.

5. No! By orig'nal ſin ſore-felt
And actual guilt, weigh'd down,
Our precious deathleſs ſouls had dwelt
In hell's all-doleful frown.

6. This day the Lord of earth and ſkies,
His Paſs to life hath given.
—Riſe glowing praiſes, grateful riſe
And follow Him to heaven.

Heavenly Contemplation for every day.

My Lord and my God, Who didſt ſay Thou wouldſt come, and bring that glorious never-cloſing day, when with holy patriarchs and prophets; with bleſſed apoſtles, and martyrs, and ſaints of all ages, added to angelic hoſts numberleſs, —we ſhall behold thy glory in heaven, intuitively ſee the Divine Eſſence, and ſhall ſing *ever*-laſting praiſes unto Him That ſitteth upon the throne, and unto Thee, O Lamb of God, once for all ſlain for us, and unto the ſanctifying, comforting, Eternal Spirit;—moreover ſaidſt that Thou wouldſt come quickly:——Amen: even ſo, come Lord Jeſus.

F I N I S.